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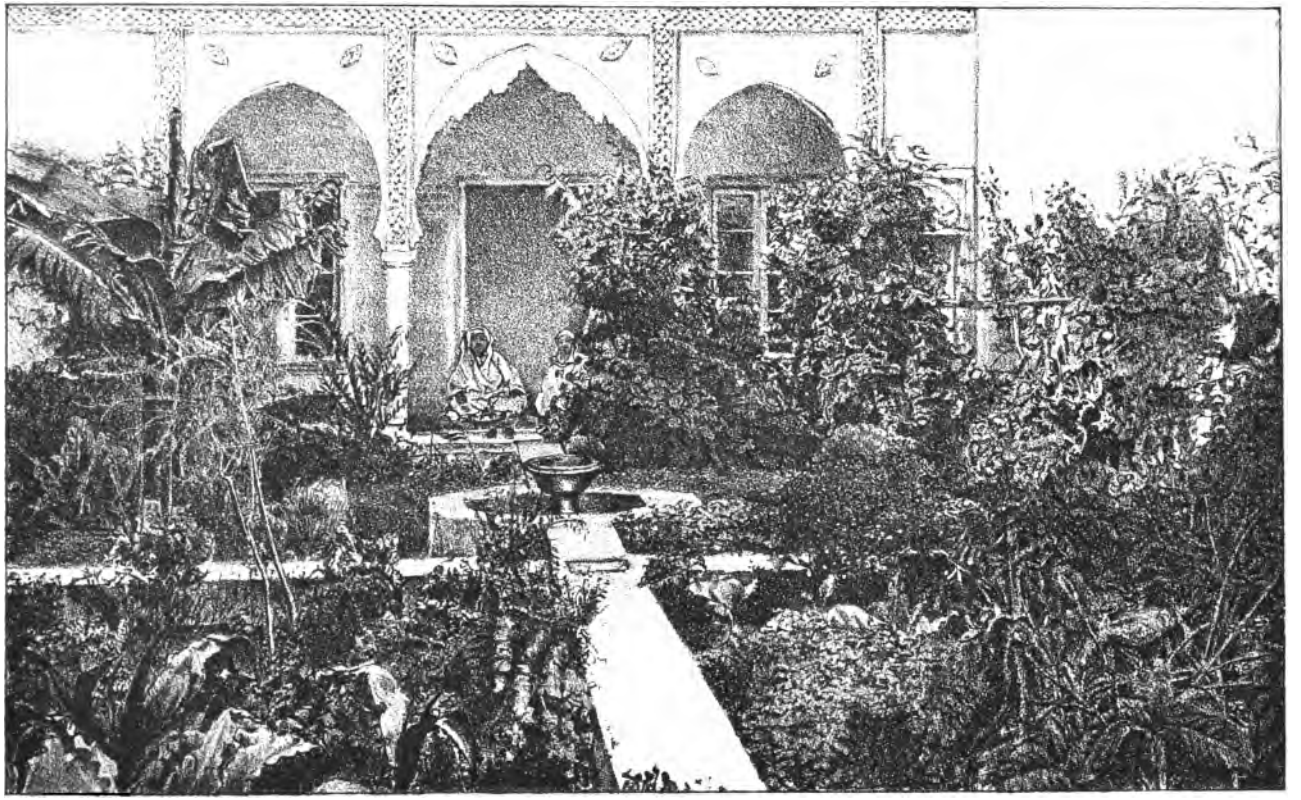
MOORISH LOTOS LEAVES



Frontispiece.

OUR TINY GARDEN IN MOGADOR.

MOORISH LOTOS LEAVES

GLIMPSES OF SOUTHERN MAROCCO

BY

GEORGE D. COWAN

AND

R. L. N. JOHNSTON

"A land
In which it seem'd always afternoon.
. . . . . .
A land where all things always seem'd the same."—*The Lotos Eaters.*
TENNYSON.

London:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND
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ments of the town towards the Jewish burial-ground —sheltered by no wall, shaded by no tree—where, *absit omen*, our five mules and three Moorish attendants awaited us. Scores of long lime-whited tombstones, inscribed with curious Hebrew epitaphs, lay flat upon the graves, over which a few white-robed Jewesses, even at this early hour, were beating their breasts and lamenting their dead. Here we were joined by a mounted soldier (an escort which the Moorish Government considers necessary for the protection of Christian travellers), whose first act was to charge and disperse the very light infantry that still harassed our rear.

Mounting our animals, and followed by the pack mules, we rode past a broad plain, which to the eastward rises into sand dunes, whose fantastic forms change with every breeze. These, in their turn, are dominated by stony hills crested with a sparse and stunted vegetation. To our left, the foamy ripple of the blue Atlantic sparkled on a rocky shore—the haunt of curlew, whimbrel, and oyster-catcher. A solitary gull wheeled lazily over

the head of a tall fisherman, whose patched and faded drapery, high-girded around his loins, displayed his lean and tawny limbs in all their muscular development, as, from a jutting crag, he swayed a long bamboo rod over the flowing tide. His eager attitude, the glitter of his deep-set eyes, and the curve of his hawk-like nose, gave somewhat of the aspect of a bird of prey to this specimen of a class which, in spite of uncouth manners and rude appearance, is sociable enough in its idle moments. Very different from the townsfolk are the swarthy Arabs we meet on the road. Trudging behind their camels and donkeys — the latter staggering along under enormous loads of greenstuff and firewood, from which not unfrequently hangs a bunch of cackling fowls—and discussing perhaps the prospect of to-day's market, they scowled at the Nazarenes, and exchanged but a sulky "Peace be upon the *faithful*" with our followers; thereby expressly excluding us from their greeting.

A mile farther on, the road abruptly descended to a broad sandy beach, along which our path lay

for a couple of hours to the *inzella** of Chisht. These *inzael*—mere fenced or walled inclosures—are instituted by Government for the collection of tolls and the security of travellers. Few of them afford any accommodation, but the two or three men appointed as guards will generally supply the wayfarer, for a consideration, with milk, eggs, and water, besides keeping a careful watch over the safety of man and beast.

High above the *inzella* towers a frowning ridge, crowned with crumbling masonry. Many a dark chapter of Moorish history is written in ruins such as these, which tell, as it were in broken accents, a tale of rebellion and revenge. Twenty-two years ago an extortionate governor, Kaid Boujemar, fanned the first sparks of disaffection among the tribes of Shiadma into the flame of open revolt by an act

* In the spelling of the few Arabic words introduced into these pages we have generally endeavoured to adhere to the military rather than the Hunterian system of phonetics. There are, however, in the Semitic dialects sounds for which our English alphabet has no equivalent, and which find an imperfect representation in such double-barrelled letters as *kh*, *gh*, *aa*, and *hh*.

of atrocious cruelty.* Inviting the five or six leading conspirators to an entertainment on the feast of *Aashoura*, no sooner was the banquet ended than he caused his unsuspecting guests to be bound there and then, and, having seen several pans of lighted charcoal placed in the windowless room, ordered the door to be built up. In an explosion of fury at the fate of their leaders, the tribes rose in simultaneous insurrection, and rallying at this spot, assisted by the forces of Kaid Boujemar's personal foe, Kaid Abdallah oueld Bihi (the powerful governor of the adjacent province of Haha), at once took the field against their basha, stormed his stronghold, pillaged his treasures, and released from subterranean dungeon, aye, and torture-cell, the victims of a tyrant whose absence from the scene alone saved him from an awful death. Boujemar was compelled, in this extremity, to send

* As our servant Hamed was in the employ, and actually in the house, of Kaid Boujemar at the time of this incident, his narrative as an eye-witness is possibly more trustworthy than Sir J. Hooker's graphic description of the same event in "Marocco and the Great Atlas."

his mother and his little daughter as suppliants to the governor of the neighbouring province of Amtouga, who brought his warlike tribe, together with a detachment of the Sultan's forces, to the rescue. Whatever excesses may have been committed by the insurgents were, if tradition is to be credited, terribly avenged. Beaten in every encounter, their numbers dwindled down by desertion and death to a desperate few, the peasants retreated to the house on the hill, which post they held in defiance of overwhelming odds, until famine rather than the imperial arms forced them to unconditional surrender. Not seldom does the Sultan send troops to seize the person of some refractory basha or too wealthy kaid, who, heavily ironed, is sent prisoner to Court, while his wrecked home remains the monument of an autocrat's greed or vengeance;* and ere long

> The lonely spider's thin gray pall
> Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;

* See "Marocco: its People and its Places," by De Amicis, p. 387.

The bat builds in his harem bower,
And in the fortress of his power
The owl usurps the beacon tower;
The wild dog howls o'er the fountain's brim
With baffled thirst and famine grim:
For the stream has shrunk from its marble bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are spread.

Here and there, not many miles apart, the tottering walls of homesteads, desolated by tribal foray, or the frequent famines of Marocco, blot the fair landscape, and now and then in a heap of stones by the wayside we see the record of a murder. No wonder nearly every man goes armed. Mark how carefully the long flint-lock guns and curved daggers are furbished up, showing how often both life and property may depend on their efficiency. Mark, too, how almost every house, except those in walled towns, is loopholed for musketry: how ponderous the iron-studded doors, how massive their bolts. Sure symptoms these that the arm of the law is paralysed down to its very itching palm. Though there are few professional brigands—save in the provinces over which the Sultan exercises

a merely nominal sovereignty—there are many amateurs eager to avail themselves of favourable chances. Sometimes, only solitary wayfarers—generally unarmed Jews—are attacked and murdered; but in years of drought these knights of the road join their forces, like the forty thieves of Ali Baba's time, to sack even small caravans. These possibly are some of the reasons why the Government saddles us with a soldier and a spy on all our movements; although, despite the assassinations and judicial murders which—in the interior—vary the monotony of agricultural existence, Christianicide is fortunately the rarest crime in the calendar.

Turning inland from Chisht, we found ourselves in a forest, where the *tugga*, a species of juniper, was conspicuous among evergreen arbutus shrubs, myrtle thickets, and *sidra* bushes (*Zizyphus lotus*). Here and there gently swayed the cypress-like branches of the *arar* (*Callitris quadrivalvis*), whose resin, under the name of sandarac, is exported from Mogador to England, to be used in varnish. Considering how highly the finely grained, prettily

marked wood of the lower portion of the bole was prized by the ancients, how has it failed to attract the notice of the modern cabinet-maker? Spring brightens this woodland scene with drifts of asphodel, white lilies, blue convolvuli, white broom flowers, wild thyme, and lavender, borage, marigold, purple thistles, colossal daisies, poppies, and many of the flowers of the Mediterranean littoral. Tame little crested larks, and more than one *tabeebt*,* flutter along in front of our mules. Barbary doves flit from bush to bush, while high above, a mere speck in the blue sky, sails on motionless pinions the large buzzard of Southern Marocco. Presently the foliage growing less dense afforded a view of the country round, which was dotted in almost every direction with the familiar *argan* (*Argania sideroxylon*).

A tract of country extending nearly a hundred and fifty miles along the coast, from the river Tensift almost to the river Soos, and about thirty-

* *Emberiza striolata*, a most sociable little bird, not unlike a sparrow, blue-collared, which it is said is only found in this latitude and between here and Maraksh.

five miles in breadth, is the only place in the world where this curious tree is to be found. Its wide-spreading, thorny branches, with their small dark-green leaves and yellow berries, and the gnarled trunk with its corrugated bark (sometimes twenty-five feet in girth and thirty in height) give a distinctive character to the scenery. Its fruit, the size of an olive, though rejected by horses, fattens the flocks and herds of farmers, who also crush from the hard kernels an oil which, to the European palate, spoils many of the dishes of Southern Marocco.

The gradually ascending road led us to the summit of a hill, where, in further ruins, we saw another of the many autographs of despotism. Pausing for a moment to enjoy cigarettes and scenery, we looked our last for some time to come on the little town —a dozen miles away—which has had for several years the distinguished honour of counting our noble selves among its inhabitants. Boldly situated on a sandy promontory, protected by a reef of outlying rocks from the assaults of the sea, which almost encircles Mogador, the high, white, castellated

walls and flat-roofed houses, above which rise the square towers of the mosques of the tiny town, glistened like a snowdrift in the amber sunshine. On the beach far below us stood one of those saint-houses which form so frequent a feature in the landscapes of Marocco. Generally reared by Moslim piety to perpetuate the memory of some local saint, these white-domed edifices are much frequented by pilgrims of both sexes, who, in prayers and offerings to such ghostly specialist as their cases may require, seek a remedy for almost all the ills that flesh is heir to. Here, too, not only Crime and Debt, but fugitive Innocence as well, find a sanctuary inviolable even by the Emperor.*

But not in every instance is the *zaouia* a memento of a saint, or (more rarely) holy woman. In Mequinez, the mausoleum of Moulai Zidan, "in which an asylum is given to criminals, commemorates a prince who had abandoned himself to every vice, who had lived detested by the nation, a rebel to his father and his emperor, and who, contemning the

* Save in rare instances by stratagem.

laws of his religion, had died in drunkenness."* Nearly every *zaouia* has one or more priests, who, besides attending to the ordinances of Moslim worship, and instructing the children of the locality in the Koran (their only education), are occasionally appealed to as referees in disputes only to be settled by the Law of the Prophet. Unenclosed burial-grounds, in which the graves usually lie east and west, are generally attached to the sanctuaries.

Another hour's ride through rudely cultivated valleys and over hills whose rugged sides were dotted with bushes of broom, brought us to a height overlooking the vale of Aïn el Hajjar, so called from the pebbly brook that irrigates its smiling fields and stately groves of olive, fig, and pomegranate, where, dismounting, we stretched ourselves under the grateful shade, rendered still more welcome by that most refreshing of all sounds under an African sun—the murmur of running water—some of which, diluted with cognac, actually ran down our throats.

* Chenier's "Present State of the Empire of Marocco," vol. ii. p. 223.

We seize this moment to introduce the hopes and objects of our journey to Maraksh.* The few Europeans who, accompanied by lying interpreters, have visited the southern capital, have generally travelled post haste by the direct road. We, however, by taking a roundabout route, hope, in easy stages, to cover much unfamiliar ground; and, so far at least as ourselves are concerned, to enjoy a temporary emancipation from our normal condition of disgusting respectability, to abjure razors and starch, to clutch a choke-bore in lieu of a goose-quill, to fill a high-peaked saddle instead of a study armchair, to escape, in short, from the confounded duties and worries of life into the poetic regions of total irresponsibility:

> There, we think, will be enjoyment,
> More than in the march of mind,
> In the steamship, in the railway,
> In the thoughts that shake mankind.

There had been some discussion as to whether

* We use the Arabic name of the city of Marocco, to distinguish it from the Empire of Marocco.

we should adopt the native costume to avoid attracting that attention which, in Maraksh at least, occasionally displays itself in execrations at the Christian; but we preferred the risk of insult to the inconvenience of the Moorish garb, picturesque though it be. Witness the dashing figure of our gray-bearded soldier Abdallah, who, having lingered behind for a chat with some villagers, comes galloping up on his jet-black barb. On his unturbaned head the pointed crimson cap of the *gendarmerie* contrasts with a cream-coloured cloak which, as it streams in the wind, reveals all the bravery of a silver-sheathed dagger, tiny leathern bullet-pouch, and brass-mounted powder-horn, slung by silken cords over his snowy *forajeea*. A long flint-lock gun lies across the high red saddle, into the massive stirrups of which his saffron-hued slippers are thrust. Our other followers, though far less imposing, present some noteworthy peculiarities. Hamed, our cook, is too often wont, for instance, to drown in strong waters the memory of days when, so whispers scandal, he was looked

up to among professionals as the Claude Duval of his district. As for our gentlemanly retainer, Cid Melood, who conceals the guile of the serpent under the feathers of a dove—he, too, has his story. Some years ago he incurred the displeasure of the governor of the province of Haha, by refusing his deputy the use of a certain house in Mogador. No notice was taken of the affront (as it was deemed) at the time, but on Melood's happening to be in the neighbourhood of Timsourin, the governor's residence, he was invited to the castle, and after a suspiciously amicable reception by the Kaid, that worthy functionary's *amshowary*, or usher, pointing to the surrounding mountains, lit up by a sunset glow, ironically inquired of Cid Melood whether he "saw any flagstaffs?" (an allusion to the Consular corps, whose influence in the seaports tends to check arbitrary measures), and went on to inform him in the name of "my lord" that he was "welcome—to the dungeon." For two years and two months the captive rarely saw the sun again, until, a week before our departure, the arrest

of the Kaid freed him from the chains of which he still bears the marks.

Our muleteer and a pedestrian friend of his, who complete the little party, were only remarkable, as we subsequently found to our sorrow, for their ingenuity in creating delays whenever Moorish hospitality offered the chance of an unusually seductive "blow out," such as awaited them an hour later under the roof of Sheikh Billa, who, standing in the gateway of his house, clasped our hands, and, raising his own to his lips, greeted us literally thus: "Welcome! A hundred welcomes! What news of you? Nothing amiss? prosperous? and your health good? Praise to Alláh," addressing one of us, "that you have not lied to me again. Three times have I received your letter promising to come. Here is your house; mine"—alluding to J——'s modest dwelling in Mogador—"is yonder." Turning to C—— he assured him with an expressive gesture that the partridges were "ready, and only wanted their master to shoot them." With these cordial words he preceded us through his farmyard into the bare

low-roofed guest-room, which our servants soon made comfortable with carpets, mattresses, and so forth.

Billa soon reappeared, and, repeating his assurances that the house was our own, placed before us a large, round, wooden tray with a high-pointed cover of palmetto leaf, which, being removed, displayed a blue and white earthenware bowl full of the fine Shiadma honeycomb, butter in a lordly dish, and milk in two or three soda-water bottles, flanked by half-a-dozen wheaten bannocks. In the course of this meal we gave the sheikh the latest town news, and, in our turn, asked after the prospects of his farm. The stereotyped reply, "Are the Lord's mercies by measure?" expressed the native reluctance to calculate beforehand the probable result of a harvest. A sketch of this favourable specimen of the "gentleman farmer" of Shiadma may not be uninteresting. His lean and sinewy limbs (characteristics of the country-folk), gracefully draped with the white toga of the Moors, bear marks—in the shape of two old bullet-wounds—of tribal feud and

foray. The deep wrinkles which seam his thoroughbred oval face would—but for the fire of his dark eyes, the flash of his perfect teeth, the animation of his gestures, and the elasticity of his gait—proclaim him middle-aged. His expression, not merely genial, but (what is still rarer among the Moors) frank, lends to his courageous bearing and kindly manner that charm which long ago changed our acquaintanceship into friendship. We must, however, confess with grief that his character is marred by one sad trait—an indiscreet devotion to the dusky sex, which displayed itself not long since in decoying away from their marital roofs the two buxom dames who, the trophies of his insidious blarney, now grace his home.

While inflicting on us a long account of his disputes with a neighbour, "a son of rascality" —otherwise known as Sheikh Hameeda—our host was interrupted by the lowing of kine and the bleating of homeward-bound flocks, and suggested a visit to the fold hard by, where he pointed out with pride the latest additions to his stock, among

which was that not uncommon sight in Barbary, a four-horned sheep. Meanwhile sunset had been the signal for prayer, and each Moslim—Hamed, the dipsomaniac, alone excepted—invoked, with many an eastward prostration, the one God and his Prophet. In the brief twilight one small gray owl and sundry spectral bats swooped inaudibly around, and presently myriads of stars seemed almost to flame—so pure was the atmosphere—on the majestic brow of night. But the chill breeze soon drove us indoors, where a savoury stew, followed by *couscasoo*, attested the skill of the sheikh's wives.* The creaking of the outer gate, and the "Peace be upon you" of new comers, succeeded by a few notes on the three-stringed *gimbry*, announced the arrival of musicians, who, stimulated by the remembrance of our past gratuities, had come to wile away the long evening with their wild Arab songs. Less proficient than the artiste

* Moorish food and cookery are subjects far too solemn to be dismissed in a paragraph, so a whole chapter has been reverentially devoted to a description of native gastronomy.

of the town—for even Marocco has its tenors and prima donnas—these homely troubadours, squatting side by side, their intelligent faces lighted up by the fire, droned out tale upon tale of amorous adventure, their intent auditors joining in the choruses, and beating time with clapping of hands. Strangers ignorant of Arabic, and remarking only the monotony of the airs, should remember that to a Moor the chief interest lies in the story; as when, for instance, lapsing into a rhythmic recitative, they alluded to our journey and foretold all manner of prosperity for ourselves. Not until midnight did performers and listeners, curling themselves up in their haiks and hooded cloaks, turn to sleep. As for ourselves, the last sounds that fell upon our ears were their snores, the rumbling of the hand corn-mill, and the faint wail of a far off jackal.

Early in the morning, C——, accompanied by several beaters, went out after the red-legs, but returned in an hour with only one bird and much disgusted at having lost several cripples, owing

to the absence of Billa, whose feats in marking and retrieving both fur and feather are simply marvellous. Not seldom does he knock over with a short stick partridges on the wing or running hares.

Sport in Marocco presents to the European some striking peculiarities. There are, except at Tangier, no game laws, no close season, and no preserves. Everybody may shoot wherever he pleases, and, save storks and monkeys, whatever he pleases. Notwithstanding the absence of modern safeguards, and the attacks of vermin that is never kept down, the Barbary partridge continues to increase and multiply, and is as strong on the wing by the 1st of July as its English relative on the 1st of September. Many a time have we gone out at early dawn with quite a crowd of natives, attracted by their love of sport to act as beaters under the direction of Sheikh Billa. Often while sweeping in line through the argan trees on a hill-side, or through the gorse-like undergrowth of the valleys, and throwing stones into every bush and

tree, they flush a covey, and, instantly halting to watch our breech-loaders, yell like demons as the birds come toppling down. The whole gang rushes forward, each eager to recover the game, and to cut its throat with his dagger, while he utters the customary "In the name of God." On one occasion a local sportsman with his long gun joined our party, and much amused us by the manner in which he stalked a partridge his keen eyes had detected in the depths of an argan tree. (Perching on boughs is another peculiarity of the Barbary partridge.) Softly whistling as, with his gun at his shoulder, he approached in concentric circles the bird (which, far from flying away, kept turning its head to watch his movements), he, at a distance of less than four yards, fired, and, as might be expected, considerably crumpled it up. Rather larger and far stronger than the English partridge, this variety of the red-leg takes a deal of killing, particularly towards the end of the season, when, deserting the open, it resorts to the thick argan covert, where generally—such is

the cunning of the bird—merely a snap shot can be obtained. Several English friends—really good partridge shots—have been quite non-plussed in this cover-shooting. Twenty brace of birds and two hares are the largest bag which one of us, without dogs, but with beaters, has made in the course of six and a half hours' shooting last July, but a crack shot might possibly double that number in a whole day. Besides numerous boar, jackals, foxes, wood-pigeons, and "thick-knees," a small bag of quail is obtainable in this locality early in February.

Breakfast over, and the pack animals laden, the sheikh came forward to speed his parting guests. "Peace," said he, clasping our hands; "this time you pass with haste, when you return you will sit long, and have much sport, please God;" to which we responded, "God increase thy welfare and keep thee our friend," a wish loudly echoed by our surfeited attendants in the customary phrase, "May the blessing of Alláh be poured upon thee," as we all rode away from the farmstead.

In front, a little to the left, rose the Iron

Mountain, on whose long, bold summit, 2000 feet above the level of the sea, sparkled a tiny saint-house. Centuries ago the mineral was worked perhaps by Roman, or, more probably, Carthaginian miners. Nothing but the senseless jealousy of the Moorish Government prevents European enterprise from re-opening this source of wealth. Trending in a north-easterly direction, the mountain meets at right angles a southerly range through which, a couple of hours later, wound our road to the governor of Shiadma's residence. Traversing the eastward sloping plain, with its rudely cultivated fields, where vines spread untrained and unsupported over the rich red soil, we passed many small white farmhouses, each with its hedge of prickly pear, and plantations of fig and olive.

Near to these dwellings, and often close to the path, the uncovered apertures of several matamores reminded us of an accident which befell an acquaintance of ours, who, riding in the dark, made a rapid and undignified descent into the cavern below—fortunately with no very serious results. The matamore is simply the subterranean granary

of the well-to-do farmer or sheikh, and is large enough, in some instances, to contain as much as 2000 quarters of grain. In these pits corn can be preserved perfectly sound—so dry is the soil—for thirty years.* It is said that occasionally a governor or sheikh converts an empty matamore into a dungeon. De St. Olon, writing in 1695, states that the Government in Mequinez lodged all the Christian slaves "dans des Matamorres, dans lesquels ils n'ont pour Lit que la Terre, et ou ils ne respirent qu'un air fort mauvais."

A score of low mounds by the wayside marked the site of an Arab burial-ground, not far from which the blue smoke of a lime-kiln curled lazily upward through the still noontide air. Frequent patches of ground turned up as with a hoe, show the industry of night-roving boar, who are very fond, by-the-bye, of the white truffle they find here in spring.

We now debouched on the narrow tracks which

* The word Massamore, or Massy More, *i.e.*, the principal dungeon of a feudal castle, is probably derived from the Moorish word.

positively form the *trek*, or main road from the chief seaport to the southern capital, and occasionally converge into one single trail, barely a foot in breadth. A Moorish road always consists of several bridle paths, winding here round a stone, there round a bush, but never for any distance straight or level, though generally but little outlay and engineering science would be needed to make direct routes of

> Those sad highways, left at large
> To ruts, and stones, and lovely nature's skill,
> Who is no paviour.

Rarely, indeed, even in the coast towns, are the thoroughfares paved; so that while autumnal rains create a rich black slush, which there are no regular scavengers to remove, summer breezes raise clouds of penetrating dust and sand, which there are no water-carts to lay. Finally, we only know of one bridge; and, with regard to sea traffic, on the six hundred miles of coast south of Cape Spartel, not one single lighthouse, or beacon, or bell, or buoy indicates the perils of reef and shoal.* Soon after

* Among other negative peculiarities of Marocco should be mentioned the facts that suicide—if not entirely unknown—is the

entering the main road, clumps of argan of a larger growth gave to stony knolls and winding valleys a park-like look. Here and there we passed swarthy shepherd-lads, tending their fathers' flocks. One bearded old billy-goat we remember — the very picture of the patriarch which gave Crusoe such a fright in the cave—who, perched midway in an argan tree, contemplated us with the incongruous gravity of a philosopher on a tight rope. These arboreal animals do considerable damage; but nothing compared to the years of drought, flights of locusts, and, above all, to the periodical fires which, in many districts, have—witness charred boles and leafless boughs—stripped the country of its finest timber.

Pausing to water our mules at the clumsy stone troughs round a primitive well, where two half-naked Arabs were hauling up the precious liquid in goatskins tied to a grass rope, we were startled by some dropping shots and loud shouts among the

very rarest of all crimes; that hydrophobia does not exist at all; and that there is no hereditary nobility in the English sense of the term, although there is hereditary saint-hood.

argan trees on a near hill-side. Suddenly a jackal dashed into view, closely pressed by two straining hounds. Rushing downhill at the top of their speed, half a score of yelling hunters followed. Inch by inch the dogs gained, and the fate of *talb Yousef* seemed sealed. A rapid double, however, threw both dogs out, and gave him time to reach unhurt the thick undergrowth of the valley.

Swinging along at a jog trot, a native courier —a barelegged and bareheaded sinewy fellow, with a pair of coarse slippers thrust into the hood of his ragged cloak, and a wallet on his back—approached our party; and halting, leaned upon his long staff, while he informed us that the head of Cid Melood's oppressor adorned a gateway in the principal market-place of Maraksh.* Mail trains and native post-offices being non-existent, these hardy letter-carriers represent the whole postal system of Marocco. Superintended by an *amin*, or Government commissioner, a corps of couriers, as trustworthy as they

* On our arrival at Maraksh, however, this statement was found to be incorrect, for Melood absolutely revelled in the vindictive enjoyment of the spectacle of his persecutor heavily ironed and ignominiously tied on a pack-mule.

are indefatigable, is to be found in every town. Ready at an hour's notice to undertake the longest journey, perhaps through disturbed districts, always over miserable roads, generally sleeping *sub divo*, the *rakas* has been known to do the double trip from Mogador to Maraksh — about 270 miles — within five days and a half; the fee, of which a small portion goes to Government, being just eight shillings. This, it should be borne in mind, is the pay of a *special* courier. On any additional chance letters he may carry, the charge is something under a penny.

During to-day's ride a conspicuous feature in the vegetation was the palmetto plant, from whose fan-like leaves are made ropes, twine, mats, dish-covers, baskets, brushes, thatch, panniers, girths, and, in the north, hats, leggings, and tents.

Not long after our chat with the courier a *sibsib* darted across our path up to some rocks on the left. Of this curious little animal, which neither of us has seen out of Barbary, Jackson* gives the following account:

* "Account of the Empire of Marocco," p. 36.

"This animal appears to be of an intermediate species between the rat and the squirrel; it is somewhat similar to the ichneumon in form, but not half its size; it inhabits the Atlas, and lives in holes among the stones and caverns of the mountains; it has brown hair, and a beautiful tail (resembling that of the squirrel) about the length of its body. The Shelluhs and Arabs eat this animal and consider it a delicacy; and it is the only one the Mohammedans torment before death. This is done by taking hold of its fore and hind legs, and rubbing its back on a stone or flat surface for a few minutes, which causes the animal to scream out; they then cut its throat according to the Mohammedan custom. Seeing some Shelluhs in South Atlas performing this operation, and asking their motives for it, they informed me that the rubbing made the flesh eat tender; that in taste it resembled a rabbit, but that without the friction it was not palatable. Being a subterraneous animal, it is prohibited food; but the eating of any forbidden thing becomes lawful to the Mohammedan

by ascribing to it some medicinal property; it is then denominated medicine, and not food; by this evasion, wine is drunk by many who are not rigorous mooselmin. I never saw the *sibsib* north of the province of Suse, but it abounds in the mountains of that district. Its motions are so excessively quick that it is extremely difficult to shoot it."

We venture, with the deference due to so great an authority on Marocco, to point out a few inaccuracies. The *sibsib* is simply a tree-climbing ground squirrel, living on argan berries, acorns, nuts, roots, and locusts when obtainable, with nothing of the rat about it whatever. Its long, soft coat and furry tail are gray, striped with white—not brown. No Mohammedan, whether Shluh or Arab, either eats or torments it as described. The *hedgehog* is treated somewhat as Jackson relates, not for the purpose of making the flesh tender, but to get at its throat. Finally, though the *sibsib's* movements are rapid, it is not difficult to shoot.

Late in the afternoon, from the crest of the

highest hill we had yet ascended, we caught our first glimpse of the stately range of Atlas, more than a hundred miles away,

> Yet rather with our hearts than with our eyes,
> So faint it is; and all our thoughts sail thither.

To show how bad the highway is, we were glad, at nightfall, to catch a boy at a roadside *dooar* to serve as a guide to the governor's house, still some miles off. At this point, personal discomfort induced C—— to exchange the dignity of a saddle for the ease of a broad pack, with the remark that none but a conventional cherub could ride a chronic earthquake without *arrières pensées.* But the sumpter mule stumbling on her knees in the dark, her rider suddenly found himself astride her neck. Frantic struggles ensued, the one animal to get up, the other to get down, the attitudes of both meanwhile being ludicrous in the extreme; until finally C—— commenced studying the geology of the next parish, where he discovered that calcareous rock was the most prominent feature.

Thoroughly chilled, tired, and hungry on our arrival at Kourimat, we experienced at the hands of Cid Saïd, the absent governor's deputy, the first and last breach of hospitality that occurred during the whole journey.* As early as possible in the morning, having distributed the usual gratuities, we shook the dust of Kourimat from our feet; Abdallah's opinion of the vice-governor being expressed in a look of mingled resentment and commiseration as, with forefinger to forehead, he contemptuously remarked: "These people lack understanding." Once fairly on the road, he gave vent to his feelings in a number of opprobrious epithets, of which "unbelievers," "dogs," "sons of Satan," and "children of sin," were the mildest.

The gestures of the Moors are no less varied

* We have just heard of the fate of the governor, Belayeshy, who went not long ago into Soos, and collected a large amount of the imperial tribute, which he forgot to forward to the Sultan. This led to much unpleasantness. In fact he was arrested, and carried up to Maraksh, where, after a little torture, he departed this life without revealing the hiding-place of the stolen dollars. The deputy-governor, Cid Saïd, promptly applied for the vacant post, and we hope he may get it.

than their maledictions. When, for example, Sheikh Billa wishes to convey a notion of the abundance of game, he holds up his hand and brings the fingers and thumb together smartly, several times in succession. To draw the back of the thumb across the forehead from left to right means early morning. Beckoning is performed by holding out the hand palm downwards, and bending the fingers towards the wrist—almost the reverse of the English method. Many a suitor in a Moorish court has gained a point by rubbing his forefinger and thumb together —a gesture seen only by the judge, and signifying filthy lucre. By throwing back the left palm shoulder-high, and patting it with the fingers of the right hand, the existence of documentary evidence is indicated; while the two forefingers rubbed together, the hands being closed, denote blood-relationship, and occasionally express close friendship. Not to weary the reader, we have known a deaf and dumb servant carry a message, imparted solely by gestures and mimicry, running somewhat as follows: "Go to the Christian, Mr. So-and-so," and ask him

to give you the book he took from my house many months ago." The volume was returned in a few minutes, and the borrower, let us hope, learned from his dumb visitor more than a lesson in signs.

Often would our followers enliven the journey with songs. Abdallah, the hoary soldier, was generally the first to strike up some erotic chanson with a gay refrain (according to his own account *militaverat non sine glorid* during the consulship of Plancus in Cupid's campaign). The Moors are emphatically a singing nation. At the pitch of his voice the ragged hawker sings his wares; the auctioneer ringing his bell intones his notice of a sale; merry strains float through the netting which hangs over the low door of the Moorish club—the coffee-shop. Hark to the shrill carol of the school, where the faith of Islam is taught in song. Even the loafer stretched out in the shade kills time with a song, for here in Marocco both *idlesse* and labour seem wedded to song. The camel-driver, as he plods behind the slow-paced caravan, hums an interminable ditty. Cheerily sing the masons, beating time with

their rammers and feet on the flat house-top. The barefooted washerman sings as he stamps his clothes clean. Shoreward is wafted the distant fisherman's song; and, sweetest sound of all, from the sky seems to fall the solemn long-drawn music of the call to prayer.

Often Abdallah, bringing forth a small leather pouch and reed-stemmed pipe, ranges alongside of us to beg for a match, and proceeds to fill the tiny red clay bowl with *keef*, the powdered leaves of the hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*).* Touching the purposes to which this plant is applied, Hamed, whose varied peccadilloes establish his right to be considered an authority on the vices of Marocco, favoured us with the following remarks: "*Hashish* is only the leaves of *keef* powdered very fine. People take a teaspoonful or two at a time, washing it down with water or tea. If you go to sleep it brings wonderful dreams, and you feel very exalted. It is the same with *maâjoun*, which is prepared by

* An imperial monopoly.

boiling the flowers of *keef* containing the seed until oil floats on the water. This oil is taken off and mixed with honey, and made into a sweetmeat, on eating which you will see, whether asleep or awake, many wonderful things. Men are as flies before you, and you feel yourself the very centre and pivot of the universe." Our own experiments, however, with *keef* and *maâjoun* failed to produce any such extraordinary sensations. Not far to the right of our road an antique argan tree overshadows two little mounds, famous in local tradition as the graves of an Arab youth and maid who loved not wisely but too well. Discovered at the trysting-place beneath the argan, the poor girl was slain by her own brothers, and her lover was shortly after seized and done to death, without the intervention of kaid or kadi. Thus do the natives nip family scandals in the bud.

To-day's short journey of about five hours' actual riding southward, at almost a right angle to the Maraksh road, which we left at Kourimat, led us by a gradually ascending path to a country differing

widely from the remainder of the province, the wooded vales and hills so characteristic of Shiadma giving place to bleak eminences where no tree, and but a few low broom-bushes (*Genista monosperma*), covered with white snails, a favourite food of the partridge and wild boar, diversified the landscape. Range upon range of light-brown hills, each higher than the last, rose before us; and from their crests we obtained frequent views of the dark mountains of Amtouga, above whose rounded tops soared mighty Atlas, as yet without his winter snow. More than once an *ahbár* (*Otis Denhami*), a bustard scaling about fifteen pounds, startled by the clatter of our mules, rose from his scanty covert and sailed away southwards.

We crossed over a large covered reservoir, which native testimony assigns to a vaguely remote period; and which must certainly have been built when the neighbourhood was far more thickly populated than at present. Its roof, of seemingly imperishable concrete, speaks, too, of other masons than the Moors of to-day. Halting by this curious relic

of the past, one of the servants was accosted by a bland Arab from the neighbouring saint-house with a request for *tâm*, a mixture composed by Moorish old wives of such uncanny ingredients as dead men's bones, asses' hair, etc., believed to cause a wasting disease for which the native pharmacopœia provides no remedy. We were not informed of this demand at the time, our servant's reticence saving the applicant from some such treatment as befell a Jew in Mogador, who, on offering an English physician three dollars "*for some poison for his brother*," * suddenly found himself in a sore, and—we may hope—repentant condition in the street.

Towards evening we came in sight of our night's resting-place, the village—if a number of straggling one-storey buildings may be so styled—of Azaghár el Asássah, which, though geographically within the boundaries of Shiadma, resembles a Berber rather than an Arab settlement. Nestling amidst the olive groves of the broad valley (through which

* A fact.

must once, we thought, have flowed a noble river), Azaghár appeared, judging from the numerous flocks and herds then returning to fold, to enjoy unusual tranquillity and prosperity. The few lapwings and snipe, ridiculously tame, rising from the marsh which feeds a burn irrigating the valley, would, but for the lateness of the hour, probably have had cause to regret our arrival at the house of Sheikh Mesoud, which, like those adjacent, seemed a hamlet in itself. On passing through the gateway we found, within the outer wall of unhewn stone, several small open quadrangles, with walls some eight feet high. Two rooms, with very low and curiously carved doors, opened on to the court-yard, where the mules were picketed—our guest-chamber, however, being tolerably lofty, its walls smooth and white, as was the floor, which was speedily adorned by the sheikh's best mats and rug. Our host, a gray-bearded, keen-eyed, and rather garrulous son of Islam, seemed at first in doubt as to what sort of treatment would be proper for Nazarenes, who, so said he, have only visited this locality

three or four times within some score of years. But on being assured, in Arabic, almost as flowery as his own, that we were no strangers to native customs and cuisine, he waxed cordial, and, after a substantial supper, and over repeated tumblers of hyson, inspected in turn each article in a compact dressing-case, the looking-glass in particular exciting his admiration. This sentiment was heightened when we explained the action of a double-barrel C. F. choke-bore, and of a single Express. "You shall return in the springtime," he exclaimed, "and hunt the gazelle with us. They come in herds to the plains of Oolad Bou Sebáh. When our sportsmen see a herd, they sit down a hundred paces apart, in a large semicircle, to leeward of the game, and one goes round on horseback to drive the herd slowly towards them. If God has given rain there will be plenty of grass and wild flowers, hidden in which you can get a good shot at the gazelles. Here in the valley are jackals and hares without number. The partridge speaks at dawn from the fields close to the house, and the gardens are filled

with pigeons, as you may prove if you will but stay here."

In the morning he requested us to exhibit the range of the rifle from a spot near the house where a small crowd of incredulous Arabs—hearing of the fame of the weapon—had assembled. A patch of sandy soil about 800 yards off being pointed out as the mark, the rifle was levelled and fired. "Alláh, the merciful!" ejaculated the sheikh, as a small cloud of dust arose; "why, this gun will carry a day's journey! With twenty or thirty such as this we could sit down and laugh at the Government." More than once was the Express discharged, and as each empty cartridge fell on the ground, a dozen lightly-clad, dusky urchins rushed forward to scramble for so rare a curiosity.

Having ascertained that the distance to the Kaid of Amtouga's castle could be easily performed in four hours, we exchanged many a hearty farewell with the kindly old sheikh, and, remembering how agreeable is a little ceremony to the native mind, we sent Abdallah and Hamed on ahead, bearers of

our letter of introduction from the governor of Mogador. At a slower pace our little party, still ascending, entered the mountainous region viewed from afar yesterday afternoon. Winding around steep and sterile heights, totally devoid of foliage, we came after an hour's ride to a spring bubbling out of a hill-side, where a couple of bright-eyed Berber Nausicaas busily washing their clothes took alarm, and, *vestibus relictis*, fled from the gaze of unbelievers.* Emboldened perhaps by our puritanical demeanour, one of the nut-brown maids, half hiding her pretty vivacious features in a fold of the striped kerchief that bound her glossy locks, returned, and, toying with the brilliant bead neck-

* An English friend of ours was stopped last year near here by an old woman, who commenced gesticulating and shouting in the most excited manner. Anxious to ascertain the cause of the old lady's emotion, he politely inquired, and was told that she had never seen a Nazarene before, and wanted to have a good look. Then she passed her hands over his coat; then she examined his hands, and quite screamed on discovering that the colour did not come off. Finally she remarked: "Alláh! the Christians are men after all, and not such very bad men either!"

lace that rose and fell upon her breast, in shy accents informed us—while the animals were being watered—that she was the daughter of a farmer in the valley below, and that the spring, which was in Amtouga, was called the Well of F'tas. Our ignorance of the Berber tongue discouraging further parley, we took leave, and, glancing back (through our fingers) before a bend in the road hid them from sight, beheld the young laundresses, their virginal forms half draped in zoneless robe of unromantic calico, their plump little feet twinkling amidst the spray dashed from the heap of wet garments.

A ringing shout from a low-roofed house on the wayside called our attention to a man running excitedly towards us. Hurrying up to Melood, he seized the hand of that majestic humbug, and uttered a series of incoherent welcomes. He turned out to be a fellow-sufferer of Cid Melood's, in durance vile at Timsourin, whence he had escaped but a few days previously. He insisted on "ten minutes' interval for refreshments" in his dwelling,

and nothing loth, we, at ease on the carpet of his tiny guest-room, were speedily at home with the Berber. To the pleasant tinkle of the tea tumblers we heard again the story of the arbitrary incarceration and the release, though the fetters, of which his ankles bore deep marks, had left, seemingly, no impression on the high spirit of the Berber.

Whether these Berbers—the invincible Gætulians of Sallust's time—are the descendants of Phœnician colonists or of immigrant Canaanites; whether even the word "Berber" signifies "hot," "earth," "son of Bar," or "outcast," we leave ethnographer and philologist to decide. Inhabiting the northern valleys and plateaux of the long Atlas chain and its spurs, the Berber is chiefly separated from the Arab by traditions and an unwritten language, which some have traced not to Semitic but to Aryan origin. Not only is the Arab unable to communicate with the illiterate Berber, except in those stock Arabic phrases connected with the observances of their common creed, but the southern highlander of Amtouga, Haha, or Soos (we regard the Shluhh as merely a branch

of the great Berber family) can hardly understand the northern mountaineer of Riff.*

Although "Punic faith" has been persistently thrown in the teeth of the Berber, we ourselves have never suffered from his duplicity, nor had to complain of aught save his too profuse hospitality. Hardier and more martial than the plains-folk, the mountain tribes have proved to successive emperors faithful friends or formidable foes—routing several armies, and even besieging the capital—and, at the present day, preserve (at least, in provinces remote from the two seats of government, Fez and Maraksh) a semi-independence which has, on more than one occasion, particularly in Riff, embroiled the Sultan with European Courts. The Berbers of the north are many of them tent-dwellers, while those of the south generally reside in walled villages, with

* There is, however, a small educated class, whose knowledge of Arabic enables them to act as notaries public, as secretaries to governors, as scribes to the governed, and as referees on points of law.

the exception of a few who are troglodytes. Herdsmen or husbandmen, according to locality, they are also great bee-masters and keen hunters. Daring horsemen, tireless on foot, they excel the lowlanders, not merely in physical endurance and courage, but in industry, morality, and intelligence. But for family vendetta and tribal feud, the Berbers could doubtless have long ago established an independence which the attempts of isolated clans have failed to secure. Beyond appointing governors—perhaps, in Riff, not even that—and the exaction of tribute, the Sultan's authority over most of their tribes is merely nominal.

Less degraded, too, is the position of woman among the Berbers than among the Arabs or Moors: higher so far as her comparative liberty is regarded, though perhaps harder as concerns her domestic duties. Drawing water, gathering fire-wood, cooking, weaving, corn-grinding, nursing, and occasionally even yoked with mule or ox to the plough, the Berber woman nevertheless has a real home; is

a wife, not a mistress, and enjoys a degree of personal freedom undreamt of in the harems of the cities and plains. Much has been written about Moorish comeliness. But what is here deemed the charm of excessive corpulence often obliterates the graceful curves of maiden beauty, whose cheeks moreover are mere parterres of artificial lilies and potted roses. Though Haidee was—at least on her mother's side—a Moorish girl, Sycorax on the other hand also hailed from Barbary; and these twain are types of joyous youth and crabbed age in Berberland. Loveliness in Marocco has no Indian summer. Withered age has not, as in England, wrinkles as fascinating as dimples, nor silvery tresses as pretty as raven curls, nor that sweet serenity which replaces girlish gaiety, so that polygamy seems almost the natural consequence of a senescence as precocious as puberty. Some of the girls, however, are as bewitching now as when Akbar, the first Arab conqueror of Marocco, carrying the terrors of the crescent into the heart of the country, found

"his richest spoil in the beauty of the female Berbers, some of whom were sold for 1000 pieces of gold."*

An hour or so later we passed the saint-house of Cidi Bou Brahim, the centre of a luxuriant oasis in a tiny valley beneath a strikingly bold bluff. Still pursuing a rising path, we traversed the Wednesday market of Amtouga, to-day empty and desolate save for the clamorous crows circling above the shambles; and, on reaching the crest of the hill, 3000 feet above the level of the Atlantic, we beheld on all sides a stony sea of multitudinous mountains sweeping, surge upon surge, from the steep valley at our feet to the faint blue horizon.

In our descent we were met by a mounted party of the Kaid's retainers, the leader of which brought this message: "The vice-governor, my lord Hosein, has said you are a hundred thousand times welcome." Shortly afterwards a gradual ascent brought us to the

* Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," chap. li.

verge of a broad and winding gorge, deep in the bosom of the mountains, which owed the rich verdure of its gardens and olive groves to the oleander-fringed streamlet far below us. Half a mile away, on the very brink of the ravine, sparkled the white battlements and turrets of the stately *kasbah* of Bou Abood. Having crossed the brook and toiled up the rocky height, we found awaiting us Hamed and Abdallah, in all the grandeur of holiday attire, which they had donned in honour of this occasion. Placing themselves on either side of us, they ushered us into the spacious court, where, attended by a large retinue of sheikhs and soldiers, the portly *khalifa* awaited his guests, who, on his rising to greet them, dismounted and advanced — we trust with a dignity almost equalling his own—to exchange the customary compliments. Then, leading the way through large quadrangles, labyrinthine passages, and broad corridors, Cid Hosein conducted us to a lofty and brilliantly-decorated reception-room, ample enough to accommodate, on its spotlessly clean divan, more than a score of guests. The vice-governor and our-

selves sat facing the door (which opened on a gallery overlooking a small garden), his suite taking their places to right and left. Discovering that neither our host nor his attendants knew more of Arabic than the ordinary salutations, we called in Cid Melood, whose thorough knowledge of *Shilhah*, the Berber tongue, enabled him to act as interpreter in a conversation which was limited on the khalifa's side to inquiries about the news of the outer world; our own questions about the surrounding country meeting courteous evasion.

Meanwhile the tea-tray, so essential a feature in Moorish and Berber conviviality, was placed before one of the sheikhs. On its bright round surface of elaborately engraved brass, a dozen or more tiny tumblers of costly workmanship encircled a couple of small, pear-shaped, metal tea-pots. At the sheikh's side stood a caddy containing sugar and tea. With practised eye he measured on his palm the quantity of hyson—for black tea is unknown here—a young slave filling the teapot, half choked as it was with a block of sugar-loaf, from a copper kettle,

the enormous dimensions of which impressed us with a vague sense of its owner's importance. (No mean criterion, indeed, barring such accidents as the pillage of a governor's house, which not unfrequently results in the distribution of his pots and pans all over the province.) The subsequent "draws" were flavoured with mint, old man's beard, and other herbs, nor should we omit mention of the delicate aroma of ambergris—a much-prized luxury both with Berber and Moor.

This room being our headquarters for nearly twenty-four hours, we had leisure to examine its mural embellishments, which were in the best style of Moorish art. The ceiling was a mass of intricate arabesques in various shades of red, blue, green, and other colours, so artfully blended as to charm without wearying the eye. The upper part of the walls presented a kind of dado; similar patterns to those on the ceiling being painted on plaster relief, under which was written in golden letters on stucco a number of verses from the Koran, setting forth, for the most part, the attributes of the Deity. Over

the door, and probably from the same volume, were inscribed formulas, the repetition of which by travellers is said to act as a charm against the principal perils of the road. They afforded, however, no protection against the dangers to which our host's lavish hospitality exposed us. Escaping from the attraction of the tea-equipage, with the view of changing our travelling costume, we found on our return a long array of large covered trays outside the guest-room, a score of which were subsequently placed before us on a circular leather mat. The first contained in a capacious dish thin wheaten cakes swimming in honey. This gave place to a tray of *couscasoo*, followed in its turn by a brace of baked fowls. It was impossible to avoid remarking the deference paid by the sheikhs even to the vice-governor, a sufficient illustration of the power wielded by the Kaid; and the question occurred to us: What is to prevent this modern Front de Bœuf from ordering his minions to "seize the Christian curs, inflict upon them as much 'stick' as the slaves can survive, and then convey them to the lowest

dungeon within my castle walls"? By a natural revulsion of feeling, we were seized by a wild desire to possess a commodious dungeon of our own for the incarceration of our creditors, and to lord it over a host of unscrupulous retainers ready at a nod to settle our "little bills" in full with the bastinado or the bowstring.

Dinner, with its tedious courses, ended, we strolled through such portions of the castle as were not "strictly private and confidential." In a large courtyard, among a mob of camels, mules, and donkeys, we saw several of the noted Amtouga horses, which, with those of Abda (a province north of Shiadma), are considered to carry off the palm of Marocco horseflesh. Roughly broken while very young, and generally picketed in the open, the barb exhibits great endurance.* But the ponderous

* "I have known them go without water for two or three days when crossing the Desert, during which time they will only receive a small measure of barley or a few dates."—Richardson's "Travels in Marocco," p. 113.

iron bit soon ruins his mouth, nor are his shoulders uninjured by the military habit of checking him at full gallop. In lieu of a light saddle the horse is burdened with a monstrous combination of iron, wood, and leather, which, resting on several layers of felt and cloth, raises the rider half a foot above the animal's back. Really fine animals are very rarely possessed by any but governors. The Emperor has studs in several provinces, and prohibits the exportation of horses; but, in Marocco at least, the probability of confiscation tends to prevent any material improvement in the degenerate breed of the erewhile famous barb.*

* An European resident on the coast, thinking to astonish the Moors, showed them the vast shoe of one of our brewers' dray-horses. But the natives were much too clever to be imposed upon. "Such shoes never shod a horse." Determined to convince the sceptics, the gentleman sent to England for a dray-horse's skull, which also was promptly pooh-poohed. "You Roumis," said the scoffers, "can make anything, even skulls; and we are not *quite* such fools as to believe in everything which an Infidel may bring to our country." Whereupon the gentleman straightway became the prey of despair.

Despite the governor's absence, the interior of the castle presented an animated scene. Here squatted a knot of roughly-clad mountaineers, discussing under their hoods the latest news from their chiefs, as they furbished up the silver or brass bands of their long flint-locks; while a black slave shambled towards them under a huge tray containing their dinner. A few peasants had dropped in, perhaps to see the Christians, and little children, always preserving a respectful distance, shrilly and critically canvassed the strange garments and odd looks of the unbelievers. The unworthy objects of this curiosity passed on, not sorry to escape from the Babel of neighing, braying, crowing, and chatter within the castle, which, like most native strongholds, exhibits an irregularity of plan only to be found among a people ignorant of military engineering. The walls, high enough and strong enough to oppose the attacks of infantry, would, though four or five feet thick, offer but a feeble resistance to the lightest of siege-artillery. Apart from the

main building stood a smaller edifice, whose loftier walls, massive gates, and strongly barred windows (none of which were near the ground) screened its inmates from observation, and proclaimed it to be the Basha's harem, or, as Arab delicacy would phrase it, "*the* house." Here too, doubtless, are concealed the other treasures of Kaid Mesoud—the traditional chest of dollars and bag of doubloons.

It was nearly noon before we could obtain the promised letter of introduction to the sheikh of Aïn Terselt. This precious document, a mere scrawl on a small and rather dirty scrap of paper, was placed open in our hands, and was deciphered by one of us literally, as follows:

"Praise to the one God, the Supreme and Eternal, without whom is neither strength nor power.

"To our beloved the Sheikh Mohammed the Terselty; God preserve you; His peace and mercy be upon you. Know that the bearer . . . . the Englishman and his friend . . . . being on a journey

to Maraksh, desire to pass through our jurisdiction, and that I request you to rejoice in their arrival, and to give notice to the tribe that these guests are to want for nothing. When they wish to proceed, assist them in every way. Peace. On the 4th of Moharram, year 1299." (Of the Hegira).

"HOSEIN,—to whom God be gracious."

An hour's ride over stony rises brought us to a barren height, commanding the entrance to a long and irregular defile extending hence to the edge of the great Plain of Maraksh. From our standpoint, 4000 feet above the level of the sea, we beheld some of the loftier of the Atlas mountains from summit to base. The rocky ground, as yet unwatered by the winter rains, bore neither bush nor flower. The only signs of man's presence were an occasional flock seeking pasture in the valleys, and a rude shieling of stones belonging to some shepherd. As we scrambled down the steep descent to Aïn Terselt, a covey of partridges scuttled off at

our approach. By-and-by the foremost of the party excitedly pointed out a small drove of wild boar moving unsuspiciously along the brow of a hill on the right. Before the Express could be loaded and levelled, our followers' shouts had scared the pigs, which, scampering down the hill, were for some minutes lost to sight, to reappear in an amazingly short space of time, trotting rapidly up the opposite hill-side quite out of range.

During our two hours' passage through the defile we saw frequent traces of troglodytes, our attention being first drawn to apertures in the cliffs, resembling the embrasures of Gibraltar. Inclined to discredit the yarns of our guide about people inhabiting these caves, we lighted upon a larger one than the others, half-way up a steep bluff, the mouth of which, about five feet square, was closed by a rude stone wall and wooden door of, strange to say, certainly recent construction, to which a natural staircase among the rocks gave a difficult access. We have failed to find any evidence in support of Jackson's

statement,* that such caverns are inhabited *only* in the rainy season. On the contrary, there seems reason to believe that some of these eyries are permanently occupied, and have afforded from time immemorial safe refuges from constantly recurring intertribal forays.

Emerging from the defile we reached the hamlet of Aïn Terselt, pleasantly situated above a valley rich in plantations of olives—the staple vegetable product of this district. Far on our left stretched an immense plain, here and there varied by isolated, flat-topped hills with scarped sides, rising only two or three hundred feet above the plain; although Jackson informs us† that they are higher than any in Great Britain! Before us, from the south-western extremity of the plain, appeared the Atlas range, trending north-eastward as far as the eye could reach. Arriving at the residence of Sheikh Mohammed, a

* "Travels through West and South Barbary," p. 198.

† Ibid. p. 82.

tall, powerful, and bareheaded Berber, robed in a coarse haïk, he, after a rapid scrutiny of his visitors, held out an immense paw, saying: "You are welcome," and, for want of Arabic, repeated the words twice or thrice. Producing a wooden key with a single ward, and fumbling with the lock of the door for some minutes, he showed us into a stone-walled, thatch-roofed room. Our carpets and mattresses having been spread over the broad daïs, the inevitable tea-tray was brought in while the letter was read out to the sheikh.

"With or without a letter you are welcome," he exclaimed, appreciatively and noisily sipping his tea; while the attendants, within hearing, led by Cid Melood, murmured the conventional, "The blessing of Alláh be poured upon thee." The Berber presently left us, to issue orders—as we afterwards learned from our followers installed in the tent—that each household in his little district should furnish a dish for the guests, and that guards should be provided for the cattle. The fruits of his hospitable

care were evident, when, soon after sunset, the sheikh returned, and, at our urgent request, partook with us of some of the stews, *couscasoos*, etc., which, at brief intervals, were served up by his brethren. While regretting the needless profusion of this system of tribal contribution, we derived some feeble comfort from the statement that such expenses are docked off the taxes paid by farmers to the governor. Whatever scruples we may have had were not shared by our gluttonous suite, who, long after we had dismissed successive trays untouched, gave striking proofs that appetite comes by eating.

Cross-legged on a carpet, the stalwart sheikh told us how his Kaid had been commissioned by the Sultan to pacify a revolted tribe in the mountains. "They," said he—we did not catch the name—"are a bad race, without law. How many times have they quarrelled with their chief! This time Cidna (our Sovereign) has ordered that if they will not make terms, Kaid Mesoud shall let loose powder, and I dare say the governor of

Mezouda, whither you go from here, will have added two hundred guns to our Kaid's five hundred. In any case, please God, you will find the vice-governor at Mezouda. His heart is large, and he will not be lacking towards you." Then, with a laconic assurance of good-will, he left us.

Taking a north-easterly direction the following morning, we at once entered the plain of Maraksh. This vast area of undulating table-land, more than eighty miles from side to side, itself some 1600 feet above the sea-level, is surrounded by mountains and lesser eminences, the Atlas range forming a barrier to the eastward and southward. Here we experienced a remarkable change of climate. The indoor temperature of Mogador during the rainy season varies very slightly day and night, and as a general rule ranges between 50° and 90° Fahrenheit from January to December. Near to Maraksh, however, the occasionally fierce heat of mid-day is followed, during the rainy season, by nights in which the mercury,

seldom, indeed, at freezing point, falls considerably lower than is ever the case on the coast. This is doubtless attributable to the absence of the ocean's equalising influence, and to the presence of the snows with which, at this time of year, the Atlas is generally covered. Though intersected by numerous winter streams, the soil remains comparatively barren, from want or neglect of the comprehensive system of irrigation which centuries ago* existed, save where, close to the banks of some rivulet, extensive groves of olive and almond attest a hamlet's prosperity. The rush of water after heavy rains, and when the snow has melted, is allowed to sweep away unchecked by a single lock, only a very small proportion being diverted into cisterns and into tiny channels winding among the plantations.

* "More than 6000 springs once poured their waters from Mount Atlas to fructify and enrich this plain"—(Chenier's "Present State of the Empire of Marocco," vol. i. p. 56)—then entirely covered with beautiful gardens and olive groves.

Shortly after entering the plain we were startled by a shout from Abdallah, "Ha! el Talb!"* and sure enough there was reynard, stealing away through the low bushes on our right. Yelling out the Moorish equivalents for "Yoicks!" "Tally ho!" "Hark forrard!" etc., old Abdallah, spurring his black steed, dashed recklessly forward at full gallop, over the loose stones, his white cloak streaming in the wind; but the "gentleman in red," knowing his ground, succeeded in gaining an acclivity too steep even for Abdallah's daring horsemanship. Not long afterwards we traversed a *dooar*, whose red mud walls were nearly hidden from sight by the thick foliage, above which rose the square tower of the mosque of Abd el Moomen—the first seen since leaving Mogador. The name recalls a stirring epoch in Moorish history. Tradition tells how the disciple and successor of El Mohedy,

* Both the jackal and the fox are nicknamed "the scribe," on the same principle that lawyers are called "land-sharks" by sailors.

founder of the Mohadeea dynasty, swept the Sunset Land, the adjoining state of Algeria, as well as Tunis and Tripoli, with his invincible band of Unitarians, routed the formidable Andalusian legions hired by Ben Tashfyn's degenerate sons, and was the first to lay successful siege (about the year 1146 A.D.) to the city of Maraksh. The glow of sunset had already begun to incarnardine the peaks of Atlas, when, at a little distance on the right, we descried the turrets of Mezouda *kasbah*, where an hour later we found a large number of Kaid Mesoud's retainers quartered, awaiting a summons to join the forces of their chief in the mountains. A message from the vice-governor to say that he had no suitable rooms to offer us, and recommending us to camp in a broad court before the castle, surrounded by prickly pear hedges of bright green, was followed by a liberal *moona* (provisions offered to travellers), while half-a-dozen guards posted themselves round the little encampment.

Furnished with a guide, we started next morning

for the house of the Kaid of Amjot, a small district lying on our route. But, when only a few miles from Mezouda, we recognised coming towards us, mounted sideways on a pack mule, an individual who recently figured as defendant in a trial for murder. Pointing to the gathering clouds and scouting the notion of our halting save under his own roof, he led the way to a broad and fertile valley, through which runs the stream Acifelmal, a tributary of the Sheshaowa. Hardly had we reached the house when the first drops of a heavy shower began to fall, and we were glad to accept the shelter of a room which, our host assured us, we were to consider our own. Gladdened doubtless by the rain, which by this time was much needed, he surpassed in attention all our previous entertainers. Along with the indispensable tea-tray came a small earthen stove, on which he placed gum benjamin and the aromatic wood of aloes. Then orange-water was sprinkled over us ad libitum, and Melood whispered: "He has gone to cut the throat of a sheep."

Nearly a year ago Cid Hosein el Amjotty, being in Mogador on business, was haled before the Kadi on the following charge. The prosecutor stated that his two Jewish agents, having sold some goods in the market close by, had sought the hospitality of the accused for the night, and that the latter, whose cupidity was excited by a supposed treasure in the box which one of the pedlars was using as a pillow, told his black slave to steal it. The bungling servant awoke the Jew, and endeavoured to remedy this *contretemps* by a blow on the head, which unfortunately killed him. The other Jew, terrified by the murder, rushed into the women's apartments, and clasping the robe of Cid Hosein's favourite wife, declared himself "in sanctuary." Her intercessions were rejected by the sheikh, who, fearing the Jew's evidence, caused both him and his dead friend to be buried in a wall which was then being added to the house. As the only evidence produced in support of this circumstantial account was the statement of certain persons, that they had seen the Jews leaving the

market "in the direction of Cid Hosein's abode" (the witnesses in question being proved to have been suborned), we trust our readers will endorse the decision of the Kadi, who, after imprisoning the sheikh on suspicion for some months for evidence to turn up, finally dismissed him "without a stain on his character."* In our host, a man of middle height, dark hazel eyes, and short black beard and moustache, we have a fair specimen of the lowland Berber; for Amjot, like Mezouda and other border districts, is peopled by both Arab and Shluh. Being so near the Atlas we could not fail to question him about that mysterious region, and so far as his knowledge went, he was communicative enough. "You would hunt the *oudad*," he said, referring to an animal similar in size and habits to the "big horn" of the Rocky Mountains; "I have friends yonder in the land of walnuts to whom we can go—to-morrow if you like. You

* But minus 400 dollars.

are anxious to reach Maraksh? Well, leave it until the spring, but don't do as other Christians have done. The highlanders are afraid of guests who bring letters from the Sultan, lest any trifling mishap—which God forefend!—should be made the excuse for more taxes. Let your beard grow: you know our proverb—no beard no shame. Dress like us, learn a little *Shilhah*, and I will take you where no Christian has ever been. You shall see the *oudad*, pursued by hunters, throw himself from a height upon his horns, and your guns shall fill the stew-pans of half a tribe. As a Berber's friends you will have a kindlier welcome from my brethren than if you brought twenty royal orders; and are we Arabs to say one thing when another is in our hearts?"

Although within a day's journey of Maraksh, we saw that the weather and Cid Hosein's entreaties would retard our arrival there, so compromised the matter by agreeing to rest the next night at Aït Imoor, to the governor of which tribe he promised us a letter of introduction. The following day, an

hour before noon, we started, and emerging from the valley passed through the principal market of Amjot. Scattered all over the country, these markets, generally designated after the days on which they are held (even the Mohammedan Sabbath not excepted), and therefore deserted six days out of seven, seem to the stranger the ruins of a homestead or encampment. But to-day on hill-side and valley small parties are wending their way to the fair, some driving before them sheep, goats, and kine, others plodding behind camels and donkeys laden with farm produce. The craving for news in this newspaperless land also attracts hither all the quidnuncs for miles round. Every man carries gun, dagger, or cudgel. Very primitive indeed are the low doorless shanties of unhewn stones. In this one a half-naked blacksmith plies his trade, now blowing with goat-skin bellows the charcoal fire, now fashioning on a small anvil thin iron shoes, now repairing guns and daggers. Close to the slaughter-ground, red with blood and black with crows, is a little cook-shop, where hungry

customers are buying *kabub** and *kiftah*.† In huts, made of boughs, a few vegetables are exposed for sale, together with piles of sweet limes, most refreshing to thirsty travellers. Every man seems to be trying to outbawl his neighbour, and what with the shouting, the lowing of kine, the roaring of camels, the bleating of flocks, the barking of dogs, the cackling of fowls, the cawing of crows, we were not sorry to leave the busy *Sok el Had* behind us.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the leading rider reined up on a low hill and pointed out a speck on the horizon. "El Kitobeea!" cried the Moors, and there, at least twenty-five miles away as the crow flies, stood the lofty tower of the grand mosque of Maraksh. At five o'clock, when we sighted the governor's house in Aït Imoor, the Kitobeea seemed no nearer than before, and, after a six hours' ride, we were by no means loth to

* Morsels of meat on skewers.

† Impaled mutton or beef sausages.

accept the hospitality offered by the Kaid's son, who, in his father's absence, gave us a true Berber welcome.

The vicinity of the capital inspired our followers with unwonted alacrity, everything being ready for a start at the hour appointed overnight. The morning star was still shining with all its lustre, and the night breeze blowing coolly from the mountains, when we commenced the last stage of our journey. Pursuing a winding path among newly ploughed fields, and over many a tiny water-course no longer dry, we struck into the high-road between Tarudant and Maraksh. Meanwhile, faint pulsations of eastern light seemed to throb in the azure veins of Dawn, as the dim and rugged contour of Atlas came slowly into view, clearer and clearer, until, 12,000 feet above the plain,* Miltsin's peak flashed down reflected rays of paly gold. Gradually the

* Jackson makes the Atlas 29,610 feet high! ("Travels through West and South Barbary," p. 94.) As the range, so far as it is known, nowhere in Marocco exceeds 13,000, the 610 is a decidedly artistic touch.

flush becomes a hectic glow, and like rose-wreaths circling hoary locks are the ruby lights that gem the snowy diadem of Atlas—giant Atlas, the Titan's son—royal Atlas, the fabled monarch of Sunset Land, who, refusing shelter to the slayer of Medusa, was straightway turned to stone, and doomed to bear for ever on his marble shoulders "heaven with all its stars." Where be thy mountain sprites, once wont—so say Greek historians—to hold their wanton revels by the lurid light of strange nocturnal flames, while strains of celestial melody seemed to perfume the night breeze? Where thy "daughters three," ever airily singing in eternal summertide around the enchanted tree? Where the red-combed dragon that once guarded the cedarn alleys and the golden fruit of the Hesperian garden?* Two dragons, Local Fanaticism and Imperial Jealousy, now guard the incalculable treasures of thine inmost recesses from the genius of modern discovery.

* We shall be glad to send a copy of this book (Morocco-bound) to any person who supplies us with satisfactory solutions to the above harrowing but highly classical conundrums.

Though for many a mile no portion of the city was visible save the tower of the Kitobeea, its site was indicated by the steep hill called Gilliz, on whose side shone one of the white-walled sanctuaries of Cidi Bel Abbas, the patron saint of Maraksh.

"You see yonder white house on the hill, overlooking the city," quoth Abdallah, who, as a frequent visitant of Maraksh, played the part of cicerone to his less travelled brethren; "there people pass the night who go to pray on (the merits of) Cidi Bel Abbas."

Whereupon the greedy muleteers express a devout hope that the *Sbaâtoo Erjál*, or Seven Men—a term often applied to the town itself—would oppose no obstacle to our comfort within their domains.

"Who *was* Cidi Bel Abbas?" asked one of us.

"Cidi Bel Abbas," replied Melood mysteriously, "was the last of the Seven Men. He lived for a long time in the mountains near Fez, until he met another sage, named my lord El Eazid. They sat down and talked of the faith. Cidi El Eazid arose, saying: 'If you are really a priest, cause yon fig

tree to come here that we may enjoy her shade.' Cidi Bel Abbas commanded, but the tree only shook her branches. Then Cidi El Eazid spoke, and the tree came to them. His companion departed, much displeased, and, returning to his cave in the hills, continued praying for forty years, during which time he stood on one leg, for he had sworn that the other should not touch the ground until he had placed it on Cidi El Eazid's neck. And when his wish was accomplished he came here. The six other lords refusing him entrance to the town, he begged from them a bowl of milk. When they brought it, he upset the bowl, but the milk remained hanging in the air. After that they had nothing left to say." Nor had we.

After crossing the bed of the river Nafees, in which the thick reddish water had begun to flow, signs of agricultural activity became more general. Encouraged by the rain, farmers had turned out all their available *bétail*, camels, horses, oxen, mules, and donkeys; and more than once we saw a woman yoked with other live-stock to a plough of a

pattern at least thirty centuries old. The implements and customs of the Moorish farmer are patriarchal in their simplicity. No new-fangled, high-pressure machinery for him. A few boughs tied together, with a heavy stone on top, drawn by a camel or mule, are his only harrow. Although alive to the advantage of changing the succession of the crops, he is ignorant of scientific rotation; and the use of manure is by no means general. Grain is stored in the large underground excavations known as matamores, the apertures of which are so deftly concealed as frequently to escape the observation both of robbers and taxgatherers. The native husbandman rarely, if ever, lays in a stock of the grass which is so plentiful during the short spring; and, should fodder become scarce, he will not hesitate to cut down standing corn wherewith to feed his animals —a practice which has caused infinite disgust to Europeans planting in partnership with Moors. The amount of arable land lying fallow is enormous*

* Some say four-fifths.

compared with that actually under cultivation; the decree prohibiting the export of wheat and barley combining with the exactions of this short-sighted Government to check enterprise and foster habits of improvidence, which produce fatal results during the frequent famines caused by drought, or the visitation of locusts, which, eating nearly every green thing, are in their turn devoured by man, beast, bird, and fish. We ourselves have seen exposed for sale, in the market of Mogador, camel-loads of locusts, to be fried or pounded into meal by the poorer classes.

Among the farmsteads and fences which now bordered our route, isolated palm trees reminded us vividly of Mark Twain's admirable simile: "A feather-duster struck by lightning." On the road, here broadened by bridle paths from neighbouring villages, we met several trains of camels, and now and then mules and donkeys, which, laden with stores from the bazaars of Maraksh, were urged forward by armed men who regarded the Nazarenes with no friendly eye. In the very centre of the

highway lay a dead horse, upon which a few crows (which, together with dogs, are the chief sanitary commissioners of Marocco) were holding a post-mortem examination. Pushing on to avoid the noontide heat, we soon came in sight of the town—not inaptly styled *El Bahjah*, The Superb—marvellously picturesque, with its nine miles of dull red battlements studded with low square towers, with its green-tiled palace roofs, white flat-topped houses and white domes, high above which rise the minarets of a score of mosques. Half buried in the varied foliage of its vast gardens, this imperial city, eight centuries old, shows few external traces of decay. Dense palm groves in the middle distance, and the snowy pinnacles of Atlas in the background —over all the pale azure sky, where a few feathery clouds float in a golden flood of sunshine—complete a magnificent picture far beyond our powers of portrayal.

On one side of the Roub Gate, with its lofty horseshoe arch, forming the south-western entrance

burglar enjoys the profits of his profession in a tranquillity rarely accorded to his industry in more civilised lands.

Passing through a broad thoroughfare, flanked on either side by walls of *tabya* (a mixture—somewhat similar to Mexican *adobe*—of lime, clay, and pebbles, beaten down with water in an immense movable frame, which is raised as the building progresses), we plunged into a labyrinth of narrow, unpaved, and crowded streets. We remark the absence of the meaningless faces so frequently seen in English cities, where Jones seems the pattern of Robinson, and Brown the facsimile of Smith; whereas here every face is stamped with marked individuality, and the features of Moor, Arab, Berber, Jew, and Negro have each a bold and separate originality. We were also much struck with the glow and the gloom of the streets, where all the tribes and races under the Sultan's rule, and not a few far beyond it, were represented in the motley throng, chequered by shafts of sunlight

and the broad bars of shade cast by the trellised vines and awnings of palmetto-matting, which often stretch across from roof to roof. In lieu of sober gray and sombre black, kaleidoscopic garbs, brilliant kaftans, white cloaks, striped jellabeahs, red fezzes, white turbans, gay skull-caps, and yellow slippers, light up the blank mud walls of low-roofed houses, each like a jail. Hardly a window looks upon the street—partly the effect of polygamy, partly the result of a despotic Government, from the eye of which men strive to conceal all semblance of the wealth it would regard as a crime. The streets bear no written names; the doors no numbers, no plates, no bells. Though sign-boards are customary among illiterate peoples, none is to be found in Maraksh; nor are placards or bills posted on dead walls. As to newspapers, there is not even a Court Circular. Evidently the art of advertising is unknown to the grave turbaned shopkeeper, who squats cross-legged in a pigeon-hole, so small that all his stock-in-trade is within his reach, patiently awaiting such customers as Alláh may send.

At many a street corner are piled the rifles of the imperial troops on guard, who, in their red tunics, baggy blue knickerbockers, and yellow slippers, either lie in lazy attitudes upon the ground or lounge in the gateways of the barracks, furbishing up their bayonets. More than once we heard the martial rataplan of a French drum, and, to our minds, the still more inspiriting call of our own English bugle; innovations due to the presence of the European officers at present engaged in drilling the Sultan's forces.

Regardless of foot-passengers, a portly official, whose immaculately white haik contrasts well with the scarlet trappings and dark glossy coat of his fine mule, ambles calmly through the dense crowd, the two slaves who run by his bridle calling out the warning: "*Balak, Balak!*" Some relation possibly, he, of the vizier who, a few weeks ago, summoned before him a man he had ridden down and gave him "stick," for presuming to get in his way! No need for yonder Arab in greasy burnouse and ragged slippers to demand a passage for his train of slow-pacing, opal-eyed camels, with their enormous loads

of oil in skins. Often, the only chance a pedestrian has of clearing a path through the crowd is by adopting the popular dodge of crying "*Balak, zeet!*" (literally) "Your attention! oil!"

A letter to a Moor had secured for us the loan of an empty house in the busiest part of the *Medina*, the town proper as distinguished from the *Kasbah*, the imperial and military quarter. The ground floor, generally used for purposes of business, consisted of a large oblong space, open to the sky and surrounded by storerooms. From the paved patio rose a dozen massive square pillars, supporting the first storey's spacious verandah and the horse-shoe arches which in turn uphold the flat house-top. The lime-washed apartments of the upper flat furnished more than sufficient accommodation for ourselves, our servants, and our baggage; the mules being picketed in the stable-yard opposite. At ease, at last, upon our rugs and mattresses, it was pleasant to reflect that we should no longer hear that utterly detestable word "*kreeb*," or "near," the invariable reply to our anxious inquiries about the distance of each day's

halt. *Kreeb* is the precise equivalent to the Scotch "bittock," and may mean anything from ten minutes to four hours' travel.

It is perhaps as well to inform the reader at once that it is not our intention to inflict upon him a detailed account of the city nor of our daily life therein; but rather to sketch, as briefly as may be, those peculiarities which have either escaped the notice of other writers or have been too casually dismissed. Nevertheless we regard it as a stern duty to present here the only statistics which he will find in this chapter.

The city of Maraksh, founded about 1070—some say in 1052—by Yousef ben Tashfyn (who, twenty-four years later, at the head of an immense host of Berbers, established the true Moorish, as distinguished from the Saracenic, dominion in Spain), was supposed before its destruction and re-edification by Abd el Moumen, in the middle of the twelfth century, to contain "700,000 inhabitants."*

* Crichton's "Arabia," vol. ii. chap. 3.

Chenier, writing in 1776,* "doubts whether the city contains 30,000 inhabitants." Jackson,† writing in 1799, reckons the population at 270,000. But Rohlfs,‡ in 1862, estimates the ordinary population, during the absence of the Emperor and the army, at 50,000. Subtracting 50,000 from 700,000, the balance indicates, though imperfectly, the results of the famines, pestilences, and civil broils, which for eight centuries have raged in this city. But all statistics should be accepted with caution in this land, where the census-taker is unknown and the blue-book unheard of. In evidence whereof we beg the reader to compare Klöden's estimate of the total population of the empire, viz. 2,750,000, with Jackson's 14,886,600.

About half the area of the city, which is nearly nine miles in circumference, is occupied by gardens. The Moor believes not only that a garden was the original birth-place of mankind, but also that the

* "Present State of the Empire of Marocco," vol. i. p. 63.

† "Travels through West and South Barbary," p. 159.

‡ "Adventures in Marocco," p. 299.

souls of virtuous Moslims will realise supreme beatitude in the radiant bowers of the Mohammedan paradise. There, amid golden groves adorned with kiosks of pearl and jacinth, towers the colossal Tûba tree, each bough laden with fruits of matchless flavour, each leaf filling with celestial melody the musk-scented air ever cooled by soaring fountains and crystal rivulets that flame with emeralds and rubies. Gorgeous flowers of richest odour, lustrous birds of sweetest song, banquets far surpassing the visions of the epicure, fragrant draughts of liquid ecstasy, together with the smiles of immortal beauty flashing undimmed through all eternity, shall make the spirit of the true believer almost "faint with the soft burthen of intensest bliss." Firm faith it was in such a paradise that, centuries ago, made each Mussulman a hero. The turbaned hosts that once menaced all Christendom with "the Koran or the sword," owed their dauntless courage to—a strange idea—the dream of a garden. Wherefore many a Moorish Khalif strove to anticipate on earth some of the glories of his heaven, by lavish-

ing on harem-gardens all the art of Byzantium and Damascus and half the spoils of Spain. Witness peerless Alhambra; witness the resplendent Garden of Zohra, where, amid a blaze of flowers, more than 4000 slender pilasters of rarest marble upheld gold-fretted cedarn pavilions and cool arcades aglow with brilliant arabesque and exquisite mosaic. In the shade of orange and citron groves, and stately palms brought from the East, and myrtle thickets where the trills of nightingales melted in the music of fountains and rustling leaves, there the caresses of magic loveliness ever invited voluptuous repose.

But all that remains to the Moor of to-day is the memory of the whilom supremacy of his race in arms, in science, and in art. Only in three or four towns of Marocco linger a few old Moresco families who have preserved the vaunted purity of their lineage. Those descendants of the mighty ones, who reared the Giralda of Seville, the Palace of Granada, the Mezquita of Cordova, the Kitobeea of Maraksh, now reside in "low-built, mud-walled, barbarian settlements," with

crumbling battlements and squalid lanes—melancholy pictures of decay, framed in foliage and flowers —rose-wreathed skeletons.

It may be well to remark, in the words of Sir Joseph Hooker, that "a garden in Marocco means something very different from what we understand by it at home. So far as any idea of enjoyment is connected with it, the paramount object is shade and coolness. Trees and running water, without which in this climate few trees will grow, are therefore the essential requisites. Beyond this the Moor, if he be rich and luxurious, may plant a few sweet-scented flowers; but otherwise no mere pleasure of the eye is dreamt of, and there seems to be among the natives a complete want of the sense of beauty. To the Moor the chief object of a garden is not pleasure, but profit." Consequently, the gardens of Maraksh, containing no trim array of terrace, no neat symmetrical parterres, no close-clipped foliage, no box borders, no velvet lawns, no pomp of statuary or rockery, are merely green and teeming wildernesses, wherein botany runs riot in defiance of symmetry. Inter-

sected by broad grass-grown avenues, overarched here with interlacing boughs, there with trellised vines, these sylvan retreats, brimful of sweet sounds, delicious perfumes, and rich colouring, are the favourite resorts of the lotos-eating Moor. Each garden contains one or more summer-houses, gay with arabesqued walls, painted ceilings, and tesselated floors, where merrymakers often wile away the afternoon with tea and music. But we choose to recline on the striped carpet spread in fig tree's ample shade, while we feast our eyes on the bewildering colours worn by motley spring,* and inhale the sunny breeze which reeks with scents of orange blossoms, roses, jessamine, and lilac blooms. Many a Christian captive has toiled to raise the high *tabya* garden-walls which form the burnt sienna background of this

> Populous solitude of bees and birds,
> And fairy-formed and many-coloured things.

* Preferring to present a description of these gardens in their prime, we have substituted for this winter that spring of 1878 when one of us visited Maraksh.

Hark! the great tank is opened, and waters disbursed from Atlas's aerial treasury of snow babble through a score of tiny channels, adding their music to the wood-notes of blackbirds, doves, and finches, accompanied at intervals by the chatter of magpie, the caw of crow, the hoarse croak of frog, the scream of the hawk poised high above innumerable swifts threading airy mazes in the cloudless blue; and once from a myrtle thicket the *Om el Hassan,* or "Mother of the Beautiful," as Moors appropriately call the nightingale, trilled forth in airily exquisite cadences her welcome to spring. An inexpressibly solemn stork on the margin of a little streamlet is attending in the capacity of a hearse the funeral of a frog or of one of the tiny green lizards which peer at us from stony lurking-places. White butterflies are paying afternoon-calls on the flower-fairies dwelling in rose, hollyhock, violet, scarlet poppy, yellow corn-flower, and white clover; the gauzy-winged dragon-fly skims sportively past in search of his afternoon blue-bottle, followed by a lustrous beetle humming as loud as any top. Wavering shafts of amber light

quiver through foliage where the delicate grace of blue convolvulus entwines the fierce beauty of the pomegranate's blood-red flower. Lemon and lime blossoms here and there peep forth from amidst the leafage of white poplar, walnut, olive, mulberry, almond, apricot, willow, aspen, and the evergreen cypress and myrtle. Towering above all, the lordly date-palm waves its golden tassels.

A couple of cows browsing, closely tethered, on the rank grass were not altogether out of harmony; but it must be admitted that patches of barley, beds of pumpkins, melons, mint, and other useful but unpoetic plants considerably diluted the romance of the scenery. The Sultan himself, however, deigns to turn greengrocer, and realises many thousands of pounds by the sale of fruit and vegetables.

Not once did we ride through Maraksh without being greeted with scowls and curses—and such very odd curses, so curiously retrospective. Our fathers and grandsires, and especially our ancestresses, half-way down the family tree, were libelled in phrases quite unfit for publication; and as we passed his

pigeon-hole of a shop, one turbaned Moslim muttered a most comprehensive anathema—"Alláh, exterminate the tribe of the unbeliever!" But it was chiefly the children who cursed us for impious pagans with an enthusiasm quite remarkable in this land of drowsihed. We found that by smiling derisively and bowing mock-courteously, we could always drive the brats into perfect paroxysms of malediction, during which they absolutely exhausted the commonplaces of abuse, and soared into execrations specially invented for the emergency; whereupon, in fear of stones, we would ride on, echoing the words of Uncle Toby—"Our army swore terribly in Flanders, but nothing to this." During a visit to the city two years ago, stones were several times thrown at C—— ('tis the Moor's way of proving his doctrine orthodox "by apostolic blows and knocks," pelting on principle the creed rather than the person). But during this visit no brickbats marred the even tenor of our rides, thanks mainly to the civilising influence of the English officer who drills the Sultan's troops. Not long after commencing his military duties in Maraksh,

Kaid Maclean was struck with a stone while riding through the town. Unable to detect the culprit in the crowd, he complained to the Emperor, who straightway ordered all the residents in the lane where the insult was given to be imprisoned until the offender should be discovered. No sooner was the delinquent betrayed than he was hauled before the governor of the city, and a sound drubbing (*drub* is pure Arabic) became for the first time the recognised penalty for stoning "Christian dogs." Religious fanaticism apart, the Moors recognise in the European a quality in which they themselves are proverbially deficient. "*Kilmah Roumëah*" (the word of a European) is the natives' favourite and strongest confirmation of a promise or guarantee of good faith. When an ambassador once expostulated with a sultan of Marocco concerning some violation of a treaty, his majesty replied: "Dost thou think me a Christian, that I should be the slave of my word?"

In any other than a Mohammedan country, habitual references to the Deity would seem characteristic of the "unco guid" or of the blasphemer.

But your Moor, be he pious or be he profane, must make use scores of times a day of such phrases as *Bismillah*—in the name of God—and *Inshallah* —D.V. When he eats, drinks, lights a pipe, sits down, rises, or starts on a journey, he mutters *Bismillah.* The porter, as he drags the false weights to the scale, the suitor as he hands a bribe to the judge, the judge as he pockets it, the sportsman as he loads and levels his gun, and as he cuts the throat of his game—all murmur *Bismillah.** Every reference to future events is coupled with *Inshallah,* often twice or thrice repeated. Let not the guileless Christian imagine that a verbal promise to pay "in three months, *Inshallah,*" represents the debtor's intentions, for non-payment at the appointed time becomes *Ma-shallah*—what God *has* pleased—and the Moslim conscience is at rest. A story is told of a Moor visiting Gibraltar in quest of credit, who, on being shown some Manchester goods, asked their price. "Eight-and-six the piece, in sixty

* *Bismillah* heads every chapter in the Koran, save the ninth.

days," was the reply. "Ah," murmured the true believer; "eight-and-six, sixty days—*Inshallah.*" Quoth the merchant, who had acquired an expensive experience of the native commercial morality: "No. Sixty days, eight-and-six; but sixty days *Inshallah*, ten shillings." Very odd, too, is what may be termed the cognominal piety of the Moor. We Nazarenes are wont to smile at such Puritan names as "Praise God Barebones," and "Hew-Agag-in-pieces-before-the-Lord Smith;" and names taken (as is the rule, barring nicknames, in Marocco) from the Koran sound equally queer, and are frequently bad fits. More than one owner of false weights of our "acquaintance" rejoices in the title of "Slave of the Trustworthy." A former governor of Haha—detested throughout the province for his cruelty and extortion—answered to the name of *M'bark*—the "Blessed One." There is, too, in Mogador, a loafer whose fiery eyes, dark skin, strong language, and drunken habits have gained for him on the English steamers (where he now and then works) the sobriquet—"Devil;" whereas in his family circle

and among the faithful he is styled "Pilgrim of Salvation"!

Sipping green tea and smoking cigarettes, we pass many an hour gazing through the iron bars of the only window in the house at the various costumes and strange figures passing through the narrow lane beneath us. Bending under a stack of palm fronds (used as thatch) comes a bareheaded, barelegged country fellow, evidently a native of the province of Soos by his black camel-hair cloak, bordered at the back with a long, yellow, eye-shaped stripe. Next come three blind men towed along in Indian file by a boy. Then a girl with a basket of unripe yellow dates poised on her head, her uncovered face and gown of blue salempore distinguishing her as a peasant from that old townswoman who, completely shrouded in a dingy blanket, bears on her head a basket full of the dark fruit of the egg-plant and carrots. Then a little black lad, wearing half a pumpkin like a hat, and carrying a basket of walnuts. Then half-a-dozen mules with panniers full of meat, and two camels with loads

of chopped straw used as fodder. Then two Jews, in dark gabardines and blue bird's-eye head-kerchiefs tied under the chin: their feet are bare, for Moorish intolerance forbids them to wear slippers in the Medina. Carrying a bunch of fowls by the legs, a Moor is endeavouring to drive a refractory goat to market; at last he takes up the animal bodily, and slings it round his neck, walking calmly on amid a chorus of bleats and cackles. Clad in a ragged, striped jellabeah, a sturdy blackamoor waddles past with a most duck-like gait, "marching wide 'twixt the legs as if he had the gyves on," and sure enough his ancles are linked to a heavy iron bar—the penalty of some misdemeanour. The fellow is a slave, yet—to judge from his extensive grin—slavery seems to sit lightly on him, and he wears the bilboes as if they were the decorations of a native order of the garter.

Then a very fat old gentleman, in a white haïk and turban, toddles past, complacently swinging the colossal key which has just locked in his Nourmahal or Fatima. Then a peripatetic confectioner, holding

out a stick, festooned with grayish native toffee, and bawling out, "Moulai Drees! Moulai Drees!"*

Then there crawls along on all-fours a poor wretch who, for some offence, has had both his feet chopped off. Let pass the justice of the Sultan! Next comes a saint, a very queer customer, evidently slightly cracked, and most eccentrically attired in a green kaftan, over which is a muslin robe. His narrow turban sticks out a foot all round his head like a halo, and as he walks along, leaning on an inlaid stick, passers-by stop to kiss his garments. Very different was he from a saint we subsequently encountered in the streets, who wore absolutely nothing but a club, studded with brass nails. The wild eyes gleaming through a shock of unkempt hair, and the curses muttered through his matted beard, made us quake in our boots.

On the walls and doorways of many houses are rude sketches of the open hand—a charm averting the "evil eye." The hand, once the emblem

* The boss saint of Marocco.

of Islam, was figured in scarlet on the white standards of the Arab invader of Spain. But Rohlfs says that "the hand is the symbol of power, and is supposed to place the inmates of the house under the protection of an invisible force." * Besides these signs-manual, there are many cabalistic spells and gree-grees to keep scorpions at a distance, to ensure good-luck, to foil the machinations of witchcraft, and so forth—witness the designs tattooed on the chins of women, the tiny leather bags (containing texts from the Koran, or not seldom such rubbish as powdered human bones, dust, etc.) almost universally worn round the neck or arm by the poorer classes, and slung round the necks of horses, camels, and mules; witness amber necklaces, coral amulets, boar's tusk, rhinoceros horn, cauls, small metal facsimiles of the crescent with human features, that favourite

* In Central America, on the walls of ruined cities of immemorial antiquity, are to be found prints of the red hand, which, according to Schoolcraft, denote among the N. A. Indians supplication to the Great Spirit, "and stand in their system of picture-writing as the symbol of strength, power, and mastery."

Moorish design of two intersecting triangles called Solomon's seal, and other fetiches too numerous to mention. Even the unsightly storks' nests on the ramparts, on the mosques, on the honey-combed walls of empty houses,* represent a superstition. The birds themselves are far away among the marshes of the Nile, whence they return here in a month. The veneration in which the Moors hold the stork is attributable possibly to the services it renders in destroying snakes and other reptiles, possibly to two traditions. Some say that the souls of corrupt judges are doomed to inhabit the bodies of storks. The other legend we give in the quaint French of M. de St. Olon: "Les Maures croyent qu'à la prière de Mahometh Dieu a transformé en ces oiseaux une troupe d'Arabes qui voloient les pélerins de la Meque."†

* Ruinous and filthy though this city for the most part is, there are several arches and fountains that would fill the soul of an artist with rapture. Some are beautifully decorated with brilliant Fez mosaic; others with lace-like stucco reliefs, or finely-carved woodwork, all aglow with the most gorgeous colouring—like bits of Alhambra.

† "Estat de l'Empire de Maroc (1695)," p. 30.

Noise is evidently another characteristic of Moorish streets. When a native argues, he apparently trusts quite as much to the strength of his lungs as to the force of his reasons, if we may judge by the frequent controversies occurring beneath our window. The country-folk in particular are wont to chat together in tones suggestive of a conversation between two persons stationed in different provinces. Camels, too, kneeling to be loaded, groan against time. Donkeys uplift their noses and bray with exceeding vigour. ("The most ungrateful of all voices," naïvely observes Mohammed in the Koran, "surely is the voice of asses.") By adding to these sounds the stentorian cries of street-hawkers, the jangling of the water-seller's bell, together with considerable singing, lowing, neighing, bleating, crowing, and barking, some faint notion may be conveyed of the Babel of tongues distracting us from dawn to sunset.

Miserable dogs slink dejectedly about the streets, rooting in the mounds of refuse, or sleeping on sunny dust heaps. Mark that mongrel yonder

barking himself almost off his legs, at the sight of "Christian curs." There is more of the jackal than of the dog in his wolfish head, long fangs, up-drawn lip, cowardly yellow eyes, bristling hair, dingy coat patched with mange and scarred in conflicts, with every rib in bold relief. The scavenger, rather than the companion of the town Moor,* there is reason to doubt that "every dog has its day" in Marocco, and even in the Mohammedan paradise only one dog is admitted—the famous guard of the Seven Sleepers. Almost as wretched as the dogs are the donkeys. The native costermonger, not content with whacking the meek pony of Jerusalem, establishes horrible "raws" by constant proddings with the spike tied to the bridle, or with a pointed stick. Starved and cruelly treated, the ass is shamefully overloaded, and by some strange law the fattest of Moors are generally seated on the leanest of mokes. It has been alleged by Dickens, that no man living has ever set eyes on a dead donkey. As we have seen

* Not even blind men use dogs.

with the naked eye no less than three particularly defunct neddies adorning the by-paths of this city, we are enabled to refute so rash an allegation, and to denounce "the allegator."

During the three days' feast of Aashoura we were often to be found in the Jammaâ el Fanáh, a large, irregular space in the centre of the town, where the fun of the fair seemed to concentrate. From morning till night this broad market-place was filled with a swarm of merry-makers, mostly country cousins we should say, judging from the curiosity with which they inspected in turn the contents of the low camel-hair tents where, in many a corner of the square, savoury doses of *kiftah* and *kabub*, long rows of painted tomtoms and native toys of every description, provoked appetite or tempted parental extravagance. For this seems essentially a children's holiday; witness the clumsy boat-swings with their freights of youngsters, who, in all the pride of new attire, scream with delight at this time-honoured feature of Aashoura. Note, too, yonder infant son of some kaid or well-to-do merchant, mounted on

a newly-purchased wooden horse, drawn by two burly slaves and followed by a small crowd of envious street Arabs. Here a few score of men in dust-coloured haïks squat around the story-teller, following with an interest too intent to find relief in applause, his thousand and one tales—whereof he accentuates the rapid recitative by animated gestures and frequent taps on a tambourine—

> Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
> Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers;
> Of charms to make good gold, and cure bad ails,
> Of rocks bewitched that open to the knockers,

and, above all, of beauteous princesses—moon-faced, almond-eyed, high-bosomed, broad-hipped camel-loads of more than mortal loveliness. Love, revenge, gluttony, and treasure-trove are the favourite themes. The sacred craving for cash is rooted deep in every Moorish soul, for this is a land where—banks being unknown—hundreds of thousands of dollars and doubloons have been from generation to generation buried in the earth or built up in the walls of houses. There is also a spice of grammarye in all

his narratives—for Marocco has of old been the home of magic, the haunt of sorcerers from Aladdin's pretended uncle down to the Seeker of the Treasures of Shamardal in Fez. So the superstitious throng hearken with thrills of fright to his yarns of wizards, who, by black art deciphering the mystic characters of Soliman's seal, have at their beck and call legions of *jinoon* and *affart*,* and who, deeply versed in the secret virtues of plant and mineral, gathered in the glimpses of the moon, brew philtres powerful to inspire sudden love or to inflict a lingering or sudden death.

It is a common trick of these itinerant historians, after placing their hero in an apparently inextricable situation, to refuse to go on unless a *mouzoona* is subscribed all round, the dodge being repeated at intervals until the listeners' patience is exhausted, or night brings an excuse for adjournment. On another occasion we saw a Moorish jester with a monkey—a Barbary ape—whose wrinkled face was as expressive of sly roguery and mischief as were

* Generally, and incorrectly, spelt *djins* and *afreets*.

the features of his proprietor. Both Arab and ape seemed to have a strong sense of humour, the showman illustrating the antics of Jocko by satirical commentaries that shook the spectators with roars of "most unoriental laughter." Though the Moors do not believe that men are merely highly evoluted monkeys, they have a tradition—so says Windus*—that certain Moors, for spilling *couscasoo*, were doomed to dwell in simian bodies. Conjurers are common; and one farcical fellow produced dollars and doubloons (which he had obtained among other false money from the unfortunate merchants on whom it had been passed) from the most unlikely places, such as the mouths, turbans, and slippers of his audience.

However addicted some of the coast folk may be to the use, or abuse, of *mahhia* and other intoxicating fluids, we saw in Maraksh but one case of outdoor drunkenness; and, save for a few stalls where the innocent native lemonade is retailed *al fresco* to thirsty pedestrians, no competi-

* "A Journey to Mequinez," p. 192.

tion attends the dozen or more water-sellers, who, with their swelling goatskins, metal mug, their tinkle of bell and cries of *el ma heloo* (sweet water) parade the market. Another curious calling is that of the peripatetic perfumer, swinging a censer, formed, in one instance, from an old sardine tin. For a fraction of an "ounce," itself only a halfpenny, he ignites a small lump of gum-benjamin, and proceeds to fumigate the broad sleeves and flowing garments of some lounging dandies of the lower class.

The low-roofed buildings which flank the Jammaâ el Fanáh, hide but the lower portion of the Kitobeea's lofty tower. Far away to the south, the snowy Atlas range rises high above a barrack-like edifice in the immediate foreground, in whose gateway, not unfrequently adorned with rebel heads—thirteen were removed thence less than a month ago—stand a group of red-tunicked infantry men. Hard by is a ghastly yard where, among heaps of putrescent refuse, lie the carcases of horses, mules, donkeys, and more than one camel. Facing the square, too, on another side stands the town residence of Kaid

Maclean, the English Inspector-General of the Sultan's army.

On Thursdays, towards sunset, small bodies of cavalry assemble in the Jammaâ el Fanáh to "play powder." Forming in line at one end of the square, a dozen or more white-cloaked cavaliers, with snowy turbans or high red fezzes, advance at a slow trot, every eye fixed upon the leader, who rides in the centre a pace or two before the rank. Raising his long silver-banded gun high above his head, he gives the signal to quicken the pace into a short canter; then, after a rapid glance on either side at the dressing of the line, he repeats the gesture. Throwing his steed almost on its haunches by a tug at the heavy bit, each horseman plunges his long spur, or the corner of his shovel stirrup, in the charger's flank: away they thunder at a tearing gallop, sweeping by us like a white squall, their white cloaks streaming behind them, their reins cast aside, their guns brandished Parthian fashion. Crack goes the volley from the further corner of the market, and in single file they return, while a new

party, or perhaps some solitary Hotspur, strives to surpass their noble horsemanship.

Night has its fooleries no less than day. Borrowing male attire, Ayesha and Zohra steal out to watch the frolics of the masquers, who, in numerous companies, parade the moonlit city. Shouts and the beating of tomtoms announce their approach as, emerging from a narrow street, a confused mass of fantastic figures and bobbing lights enter the square. In the centre is a large rose-coloured and brilliantly illuminated paper frame, carried on men's shoulders, and intended to represent the hull of a steamer. Tall canes supporting Chinese lanterns do duty for masts. Before it go a score of jigging musicians, some in masks, some in hairy skins, some dressed in cast-off Christian garments, and all bawling at the top of their voices and beating their tomtoms with abominable energy. From this dancing is possibly derived the morris (or Moorish) dance, and among these mummers we perhaps behold the originals of St. George and the Dragon, Maid Marion, and Robin Hood.

Though never dancing himself, your Moorish

swell highly appreciates his harem-ballet, and willingly pays an extra score of dollars for a slave who can beat time with her feet to the thrumming of guitar and gimbry. This union of music and the dance is a favourite amusement of the gilded youth of Marocco, who, in the total absence of burlesque and opera, occasionally club together to defray the expense of an entertainment *chez eux.* Many and lively are the discussions as to the selection of the *artistes,* the charms of each being canvassed with critical enthusiasm, until, finally, a confidential messenger is despatched to the chosen *sheikha,* or *première danseuse,* saying: "Cid Abd el Kareem and two friends salute you, and, wishing to make a *fraja** to-morrow evening, request that you, with Lalla Fatóma and her sister Kultoum, who live by the mosque of Cidi Bel Abbas, will come to Abd el Kareem's garden shortly after sunset prayer." Meanwhile the revellers, having provided materials for supper, repair to the rendezvous, and recline on

* Entertainment, or, more literally, "spree."

the cushions in the pavilion of the tiny garden, listening, while they await the arrival of their guests, to the fountain's music falling through the rose-fragrant air.

The musicians are the first to appear, carrying under their cloaks their respective instruments, a guitar and a two-stringed violin called *erbab*, and take their places, after effusive salutations, on a divan at the lower end of the room. Another cautious tap at the gate is shortly followed by the entrance of the girls themselves, who, throwing aside their haïks, reply to the eager welcome of their hosts by stooping to kiss the hand of each before posing among their cushions for this costume-sketch. Beneath brilliant silken kerchiefs dark eyes flash with a lustre that needs no heightening with *kohol*, nor do the dimpled olive cheeks and rosy lips of sweet fifteen require the glow of *henna*, the rouge of Marocco. On either side of oval faces swing large ear-rings of gold. Kaftans, one crimson, one pale blue, a third amber, gleam through the wide-sleeved muslin *forajeeas*, which, descending from the throat, reveal, a little below the knee, wide trousers of bright hues.

An interchange of florid compliments is the prelude to green tea and cigarettes all round. Placing some chips of aromatic aloe-wood on the charcoal embers in a brazen cassolet, Abd el Kareem hands it to Lalla Tahra, who, allowing the scented vapour to fill her ample sleeves, passes the censer to her neighbour. Orange-water being then showered over the convives, the musicians, after a few long love-songs, suddenly strike up the first thrilling notes of a *jibli*, or dance tune. Every eye brightens when, baring her shapely arms, Lalla Tahra snatches a tambourine from Fatóma, and advancing with well-simulated coyness, commences her *pas seul*. Gaily tinkle her (borrowed) golden anklets to the rhythmic thud of her small pink feet upon the soft many-coloured rug, as, in a kind of double-shuffle, accompanied by a curious circular movement of the hips, she throws her lithe form into attitudes full of amorous grace. Quicker and quicker goes the music and the song, louder and louder do the spectators mark the time by clapping of hands, until, in an outburst of applause, Tahra sinks on one knee before Abd el

Kareem, who, exclaiming "Alláh be praised for thee!" presses on her forehead the small gold coin that guerdons her skill.

Glancing around with a grin that communicates itself to the faces of his comrades, he produces from beneath the divan two capacious stone jars. Calling for tumblers, he pours out a rosy liquid which, but for his creed's prohibition, bears a strange resemblance to the sweet wine of Demnat, and certainly increases the general hilarity.

"Give us the song of Moulai Bou Schaïb!" cry Fatóma and Kultoum simultaneously, as they rise, one holding aloft a brimming glass, the other balancing on her head the brass tea-tray with its circle of tiny tumblers and a lighted candle in the centre. To the familiar strains of that popular drinking-song, the two girls join in a bacchanalian dance, bursting into the chorus in which all take part:

Here's to the glass, to the glass of wine!
O Moulai Bou Schaïb, we call upon thee!
For all ills thou hast the anodyne;
Soothe me, soothe me!*

* Translated word for word.

faster and more furious grows the fun from supper-time till midnight, at which hour, we will suppose, concludes this sample of Moorish festivity.

Being assured by a Mr. Bonich—at the time the sole resident Christian in Maraksh—that very fair sport was obtainable within an hour's ride of the city, we* mounted our animals one fine morning, and, passing through the Friday-market gate, in due time found ourselves in the vast palm-groves. Dismounting, we walked towards a marsh, about a mile off, much frequented by duck. Presently a covey of partridges was flushed, and one bird knocked over. Leaving the red-legs, we pushed on, soon reaching a very promising acre of marsh, surrounded by tolerably thick cover. But, unfortunately, a hare, darting from her form almost under Bonich's feet, so excited that most courteous but impulsive gentleman that he fired and missed, when, at once, five companies of duck—seventy or eighty birds at least—sheldrake, scoter, shoveller, pintail, and teal, rose just out of range, and, after

* Mr. Bonich and C——.

circling round, flew towards the adjacent river Tensift. But we put up an astonishing number of snipe, bagging only one couple—each killed with a single pellet of No. 4. On the way to the river a teal was elaborately stalked and shot. We saw here several flocks of the "birds of the cow," as the Moors call a small heron who attends cattle in the capacity of a professional insecticide. Though lacking the crest, this pretty bird, with its dazzling white plumage and stilt-like legs, closely resembles the egret, and abounds in the plain of Maraksh. In the course of a couple of hours' walking up-stream, another teal and a brace of shoveller were secured, after missing some long shots at ruddy geese, pintail, and scoter. Quitting the river at the bridge*—the only bridge we know of in Southern

* "This bridge," says Jackson ("Empire of Marocco," p. 6), "was erected by Mulai el Mansor"—who reigned from 1186 to 1210.

"This bridge," says Chenier ("Present State of the Empire of Marocco," vol. i. p. 63), "was built, about the end of the sixteenth century, by the Portuguese slaves who survived the defeat of Don Sebastian."

This discrepancy of more than three centuries is rather confusing.

Marocco—we were not long in the palm grove before adding five and a half brace of partridges and one wood-pigeon to a bag, which—for by no means good shots, in five hours' shooting—was not very contemptible. On another occasion, five brace of partridges, two brace of plovers, and two and a half brace of teal, fell to two guns in three hours.

The feast of Aashoura is the occasion for all true Mussulmans to give a tithe of their income to the poor. It commences on the tenth day of the first month, Moharram, and lasts three or four days. The distribution of this charity is subject to no interference either of church or state, every man being free to give as much or as little as he pleases, to whom he pleases, poor relations generally coming in for the lion's share. It may be that the charitable associations of Aashoura account for the unusual force of beggars we see in every street; not peripatetic like the crowds of the halt and the blind who parade the mercantile quarters of Mogador every Friday, but crouching under archways, and huddled together at the wayside. Without ad-

dressing anyone in particular, they moan out such supplications as:

"Will a believer give me two 'ounces' (one penny), to buy supper?"

"God preserve the almsgiver from hunger."

"For the Lord God's sake," and so forth.

Near to the Jammaâ el Fanah, an old man daily chants a rhythmical demand for *floos*; the four or five children with him shouting "Amen," after every couplet. Not far from these was a small bundle of humanity hidden in ragged sackcloth garment, from which a tiny hand was held out, grasping a wooden bowl. The coin dropped into this receptacle was quickly transferred to some safer place, and again the childish voice piped out its sad appeal. Riding before us the other day, Melood, in his gay holiday attire, attracted the notice of half-a-dozen most ill-favoured beggars near to the Bab el Roub. The pumpkin bowl lying before them, and their cry in chorus, proclaimed the fact of their being in partnership. Bending with a magnificent air, the cavalier handed one of them the equivalent of the tenth of a penny,

and went on his way under a perfect hurricane of benedictions.

Mendicancy, like many other professions in Marocco, is often hereditary. In addition to the genial climate, the infinitesimal coinage, the cheapness of food, and the insecurity of property, all of which favour the development of pauperism, its ranks are further recruited by the victims of ophthalmia, leprosy and other diseases, by mutilated criminals, and by saints.

Outside the city, close to the north-western gate, is the walled village of lepers. Squatting on either side of the road, many of them beg in husky tones the passers-by to drop *m'taâ Arbí* (God's property) into their little wooden bowls. Never allowed to enter the city, and doomed ever to watch in others the progress of the fell disease which will ultimately destroy themselves piecemeal, these miserable creatures—about two hundred in number—are the saddest of all the melancholy sights of Maraksh.

Not only at the street corners, but often in the

gateways of mosques, squats the money-changer, his basket of dirty floos before him. Of the smallest pieces of this debased copper coinage* no less than 2160 would be given at the present rate in Maraksh (viz. ninety ounces to the dollar) in exchange for a French five-franc piece—forty-five being equivalent to one penny. Mark Twain says: "I saw none but what was dated four or five hundred years back, and was badly worn and battered. These coins are not very valuable. Jack went out to get a napoleon changed, so as to have money suited to the general cheapness of things, and came back and said he had 'swamped the bank;' had bought eleven quarts of coin, and the head of the firm had gone on the street to negotiate for the balance of the change." The impression of the brilliant American that the coins were dated "four or five hundred years back" arose from the fact (if he were not jesting), that the

* Even in the time of Haroun Alraschid, the *fls* (plural, *floos*) or "fols" seemed to have been the current copper coin of the Persian and Byzantine empires. "Vera moneta ærea nomine *follis* signabatur, ut æreorum sub Aarone Raschido cussorum qui hoc nomen servavit."—"Introductio in Rem Nummariam Muhammedanorum," p. 8.

Mohammedan era differs from our own: the present Moslim year being 1299 after Mohammed.

Since the recent withdrawal of the one, two, and four-ounce pieces, Marocco has had no silver currency of its own. The ducat (ten ounces), the mouzoona (six floos), the ounce (twenty-four small, or twelve larger, or six of the largest floos), are merely imaginary values, no longer represented by coins. The Spanish peseta, and French and Spanish gold (for Moorish gold coins are almost obsolete), complete the list of current money. More than one royal decree has been issued fixing the exchange of the dollar* at half the actual rate, and the imperial mint-master, by pouring out his stores of floos, cleared considerable sums; the effects of such edicts, though but temporary, cause much disturbance in the rates of wages, prices of food, etc., until the irresistible laws of supply and demand—stronger even than the power of the Shereef—force the value of the floos down to its proper level. The authority to mint has been occasionally farmed

* The French five-franc piece. Spanish dollars are also current coins.

out, and this fact, in addition to the immense issue of false floos, accounts for the rapid depreciation during late years of the copper currency.

Although Marocco possesses no banks, and usury is forbidden by law, both Hebrew and Moslim, there is a generally recognised rate of interest, twelve per cent. per annum. This feature of a transaction is artlessly veiled by being added to the original amount of the loan. Talking of interest, some Court officials must have a gay time of it when country governors, pressed for cash on their periodical visits to the Emperor, are willing to borrow it—on such substantial security as mortgages on ponderous gold anklets, bracelets, and ear-rings—at the rate of sixty, eighty, and occasionally a hundred per cent. A case came under our personal knowledge in which a firm in Maraksh lent 1000 dollars to a kaid on security of the kind above mentioned, for which they received 1400 dollars, capital and interest, in three months from the date of the loan. The statement that a far larger quantity of foreign silver has been imported into

this country than can now be accounted for indicates the common practice of burying specie. One of us is acquainted with a gentleman, long established as a prosperous merchant, who discovered in his cistern in Mogador a box, said to contain 20,000 dollars' worth of gold and silver coins, probably deposited there during the French bombardment of the town in 1844.

"Would you like to buy a slave?" inquired Cid Melood, with a smile, one Thursday afternoon. "The market opens at *Inzel Aaser* (the end of afternoon prayer), and, in the name of Alláh! the merciful and longsuffering! it is half-past three now." A slave market is held in Maraksh twice a week, in a square court, some thirty paces across, on each side of which is a row of mud-walled booths, mostly in a decayed condition. Down the centre is a kind of arcade, between whose crumbling columns runs a double row of stone benches. Taking our places on one of these seats, as the moudden's voice was ringing out from a near mosque tower the conclusion of devotions, we observed that the booths

were gradually filling, their previous occupants—cheeky little sparrow-like tabeebts, gaily-coloured finches, and black starlings—giving place under a chirping protest to grave and reverend signiors in spotlessly clean haïks, to town loafers in coarse, hooded cloaks, mountaineers determined to see all the sights of the city, here and there a long-fezzed soldier, and, taking up their position in a secluded corner of the market, a score or so of haïked and veiled Moorish ladies. Just opposite us, at a corner of a booth, sat a man, whose scrupulously neat apparel, faultlessly arranged turban, and self-contented air, no less than the rosary which dangled from his delicate fingers, proclaimed him a *taleb*, one of that class which, deeply versed in the Koran and the traditions of Islam, keeps alive the fanaticism and encourages the ignorance of the Moors.

"Three hundred and twenty ducats," cries a jaunty auctioneer, stepping briskly on the scene, followed by a couple of boys, of perhaps twelve and eight years of age. Girding his cloak around him with a business-like air, and repeating at

intervals the latest bid offered, he leads them from booth to booth, where they undergo a close and skilful scrutiny by intending purchasers. They are questioned, to see if they know Arabic; their teeth, hands, and joints critically examined. (As many of the slaves now domesticated in Marocco were originally obtained by the kidnapping which is still practised in the neighbourhood of the Soudan, a knowledge of Arabic in the younger slaves is an accomplishment to be considered in their price.) By this time, upwards of two hundred people have assembled. Other auctioneers appear, introducing to the public their chattels, male and female, of whom some are bashful, some sulky, and others remarkable for the meretricious finery distributed about their otherwise scanty garments, and for a leer intended to captivate some indulgent (and rich) purchaser. One little girl, half draped in a shift of gaily striped print, paced with naked feet that dreary enclosure until her price rose to 450 ducats —at the present exchange, about ten pounds—and was then bought in. A young negro giant followed,

whose repulsive physiognomy and shuffling gait seemed the index to a whole volume of rascality; he was knocked down at two pounds,* and we found, by a calculation based upon his apparent weight, that his market value was about threepence per pound—just half the present price of beef! Here we were accosted by a smiling old Moorish gentleman, whom we recognised as Cid Taleb Bou Halál (Father of the Lawful!) Having chatted about Mogador news for some minutes, he gathered himself up to depart, and, anxious to air his acquaintance with our language and prejudices—gained during a visit to London—he added: "I say, in England no catch black man slave, eh? No."

Yet there are writers even nowadays who attempt

* "Boys at the age of nine or ten years sell the best; female slaves do not fetch so much as male slaves, unless of extraordinary beauty. The ordinary price of a good slave is eighty dollars. . . . Ten thousand (Edmondo de Amicis says 'a little less than three thousand') have been imported during one year; but the average number brought into Marocco is, perhaps, not more than half that amount."—Richardson's "Travels in Marocco," p. 67 (1860). See also Edmondo de Amicis' "Marocco," p. 327.

apologies for an institution that cannot be defended. Extenuating circumstances forsooth! We are told that the law of Mohammed and the interest of the slave-owner insure immunity from ill-usage. The slaves are so happy, so attached to their owners that they refuse to be liberated, so much better off than if free in Guinea or Bombara! For the facts that husband is separated from wife, and children torn from parents, that women cannot expect to preserve their chastity,* that both sexes the master may beat, manacle, and imprison; for these and other worse facts the apology offered is that they are only, yes, *only* the exceptions to the rule of Moorish philanthropy. That slaves are generally well treated in the coast towns, thanks to European influence, we do not deny; but in the interior, where agricultural slavery, as distinguished from purely domestic slavery, is by no means uncommon, what *real* checks are there on the governors, or on the largest slave-owner of all—the Sultan?

On the whole, however, the Moors themselves

* See Richardson's "Travels in Marocco," p. 268.

seem to think that the institution has its drawbacks* even for themselves—witness the punning proverb: "Blessed is the household that has neither M'bark nor M'barka." †

We are ashamed to add that sundry Europeans, and a few English subjects whom we could name, absolutely own slaves under cover of native agents—and this within fifteen hundred miles of Exeter Hall!

Ascending one evening to the flat roof—a favourite lounging-place about sunset—we obtained a bird's-eye view of Maraksh. The first thing that would strike a stranger is the entire absence of unpoetic chimney-stacks. No smoke curls upwards

* "The truth is, respectable Moorish females detest this system of domestic slavery and wish to see it abolished, notwithstanding that they are bred in it, and are themselves little better than slaves. They see themselves gradually abandoned by their husbands for the most ignorant and degraded negresses, whom their husbands purchase one after another as their caprice or passion excites them, until their houses are filled with these slaves."—Richardson's "Travels in Marocco," p. 264.

† Names signifying "the Blessed One," very frequently given to slaves.

from the houses. Not a light glimmers in the thoroughfares save the lantern of the guard of the gate. Now and then the crow of chanticleer, mistaking moonshine for the break of day, or the excruciating serenade of amorous grimalkin, or the scattering reports of the nine o'clock guns (the signal for closing the inner gates of the city), or the fine, clear tones of the moudden, each seems to intensify rather than to disturb the strange silence of the streets. After the heat of noontide, inexpressibly refreshing is the temperature of the evening breeze, which positively seems to throb—almost to ache—with the pure radiance of the young moon, a Joan of Arc in argent mail patrolling the sentry stars—stars so brilliant as to seem sunbeams which have chanced to get benighted in the dark violet sky. Delicately etched are the outlines of the dull-red battlements, the high, square mosque towers with their jet-black shadows, and the silver-frosted foliage which half conceals the squalor and irregularity of this city of palms. Whitewash gives itself the airs of marble, crumbling mud walls affect the

picturesque, and this metropolis in decay leaps into youthful beauty beneath the

> wide and tender light
> Which softens down the sour austerity
> Of rugged desolation, and fills up,
> As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries.

Thirty miles away, beyond the palmy plain, the snows of Atlas seem the pearl-broidered borders of Mother Midnight's mantle. Apropos of moonshine and the crescent of the Prophet, it may not be generally known even to astronomers that the planet, once upon a time, "stooped from her station in the sky, accomplished the seven revolutions round the Caaba, saluted Mohammed in the Arabian tongue, and, suddenly contracting her dimensions, entered at the collar, and issued forth at the sleeve of his shirt." This statement, though recorded by Gibbon, should, in our opinion, be regarded with considerable suspicion.

Every Friday* the Emperor goes to the mosque.

* It is curious that our unluckiest of days should be the Moor's "prince of days," the day when creation was finished and

To our imagination the Sultan was no familiar modern majesty, but rather a mysterious potentate akin to Prester John, the Grand Mogul, or the great Cham of Tartary. We were prepared to behold him reverentially in his golden prime, a nineteenth century replica of Good Haroun Alraschid.

About eleven o'clock in the forenoon the streets, through which the Sultan passes to the mosque, are lined with infantry, their bayonets flashing in the sun, their red and blue uniforms adding to the motley colours of the crowd behind the ranks. "Attention!"* The gates of the palace are thrown open. Six splendid led horses, gaily caparisoned, head a long and picturesque procession of white-robed officials, while the brass band of renegades

Adam moulded from "seven handfuls of earth;" the day when the Great Prophet made his first entry into Medina; the day on which "the blast of consternation" shall usher in the Last Judgment. On Friday, too, the outer and inner gates of all Moorish towns are closed during service, because of a tradition that the Nazarenes—re-enacting the Sicilian Vespers—will surprise all true believers at their prayers, and annex the country.

* The words of command are given in English.

strikes up the Spanish March. "Present Arms!" Then His Shereefian Majesty, Moulai Hassan, passes, seated in a ridiculous green and gold one-horse chaise (driven by a man on foot), attended by two lance-bearers and two fly-flappers. Yes; a dilapidated old ruin of a chaise that might fetch five pounds at an auction, represents the state-coach of an empire! It is hard to realise that the middle-aged gentleman in the "one-hoss shay" is the autocrat of Marocco. Nevertheless, dressed with ostentatious simplicity, all in white, his majesty's presence is imposing. Beneath a snowy turban, contrasting finely with the olive complexion of his oval face (there is a dash of Irish as well as Negro blood in the imperial veins), glitter eyes that somehow remind one of icicles and snakes, and of the rumour in the city that the Sultan only yesterday killed one of the ladies of the harem with his own hand. It is said that when his majesty happens to get up "on the wrong side of the bed," the whole Court, from the prime minister down to the fly-flapper, is in a very "blue funk." But to a great

extent the Sultan sees only through the eyes of ministers, who appear to carry out with blind obedience the decrees of a power they in reality hoodwink and control. Each vizier represents a faction, *not* a political principle, and the myriad intrigues of the Court, the policy of domestic extortion and foreign obstruction, are as perilous to the throne as the tribal revolts (not seldom fomented by Government to avert a national revolution), arising from the abuse of deputed authority, are injurious to the prosperity of the realm:

> So that whether
> A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
> Distract within, both will alike prove fatal;
> The first his subjects have no heart to conquer;
> The last they rather would assist than vanquish.

But Moorish politics have been abused by abler pens; nor will we venture to bore our readers with crude criticisms on the decay of the arts and the decease of the sciences, on the corruption of the law, on the evils of polygamy, on the wretched state of the army, on the non-existence of the

navy, nor, in short, on any of the symptoms that herald the decline and fall of Marocco. Neither will we describe our uneventful return journey to Mogador. But we will conclude with the startling statement that thirty-five days' most enjoyable sojourn in the interior of this most interesting country cost us exactly seventeen pounds each.

II.

BOAR SHOOTING IN SHIADMA.

GREAT was the bustle and animation which, one brilliantly fine morning not many months ago, pervaded a certain little camp on a low plateau above the river Tensift* in Southern Marocco. Close to a vast argan tree, many centuries old, are pitched five bell-tents, the focus, so to speak, of the general excitement exhibited in the speech and gestures of thirty or forty swarthy Moors, armed either with long-barrelled flint-locks (glorified gas-pipes I call them), or long staves, or short curved sticks, not unlike boomerangs. To the left of the tents, near a thorn fence which encircles half a score low, thatched, hive-shaped huts, squats a small crowd of dusky women and naked children,

* About forty-eight miles north of Mogador.

all watching the proceedings with a deep and critical interest. Moorish servants—whose flowing white haïks, bright yellow slippers, and voluminous turbans, contrast strongly with the scanty drapery of the bare-legged, bare-armed, and, for the most part, bare-headed country Moors—are removing the ruins of a most substantial breakfast spread in the broad shade of the argan tree. (Permit me to pause for a moment to offer the tribute of a regretful sigh to the memory of a sublime ham, of which I now vainly wish that I had taken more than three helps.) Dogs are barking enthusiastically all over the camp, and sundry skittish mules, driven to water, are galloping towards the Tensift in mimic stampede through the low white-broom bushes near the crumbling walls of the ruined dwelling of some dead and gone sheikh. There is, in short, as much fuss and flurry as if elephants were to be hunted rather than pigs—plebeian, mire-rejoicing, unromantic swine. Presently some Moors arrive with a present from the sheikh of the district—two sheep and twenty fowls

—and a message of welcome which they deliver with profuse compliments to that "Christian dog" there, puffing away cheerily at a short, black pipe as he polishes his central-fire—a most unmistakable Englishman. Clad in rough, heather-tinted, shooting-coat, knickerbockers (which reveal "fatted calves" of a size and symmetry that have for years corroded my soul with envy), collarless flannel shirt and soft broad-brimmed felt hat, he looks and is a sportsman *au bout de ses ongles.* But he does *not* look the Personage (with a large P) that he really is. To see him on State occasions, in a claw-hammer coat profusely blazoned with golden oak-leaves, in gold-striped unmentionables, in a cocked-hat that far outshines the wealth of Ormus and of Ind, in a resplendent sword, ah! 'tis a sight to dazzle human vision with "excess of glory," were it not tempered, softened, shaded, so to say, by the dignified urbanity of his consular smile. (A consul in Marocco, let me inform you, is, vulgarly speaking, a very "big bug," a far bigger bug, at least, than ordinary consuls, for he

has power to put the British subjects residing within his jurisdiction into the house of bondage for many months, also to fine them many shekels of silver or fine gold). Basking in the subdued radiance of the consular presence lies stretched at full length on a striped Moorish rug one of the nicest fellows I have ever known; in fact, *the* nicest, without any exception, distinguished alike by the winning geniality of his expressive "mug" and the sweet gentle modesty of his manners. His name is, ahem! well, his name is Cowan; and he is lazily wondering how many pigs will be rolled over in the course of the day by that very neat workmanlike 12-bore Reilly, just handed to him by a bright-eyed Moorish lad, whose name ought to be Barabbas instead of Hassan.

The sheikh's messengers also announce that the rest of the beaters, about one hundred, are assembled a couple of miles away, awaiting the signal to commence the grand "drive" which has been got up in honour of El Consul. Whereupon another member of our party, mounting a fine bay

horse, and followed by his native falconer, also on horseback, with one hawk on his gauntleted wrist and another perched on the back peak of the high Moorish saddle, canters gaily away to meet and direct the beaters. Nearly every man in camp and not a few youngsters hurry after, some of them singing a wild hunting song.

Then the consul and I, solemnly refilling our pipes, and grasping our guns with the air of men resolved to do deeds of desperate daring, toddle away, no—consuls *never* toddle—I mean saunter across the low plateau, and descend to the broad plain through which the Tensift river generally runs; I say generally, because in this dry season only isolated pools mark its course. Ten minutes' brisk walking brings us to a kind of gorge or very narrow valley through which the river seems to have forced a path. The low wooded hills on our right are dwarfed into insignificance by the bold and far loftier argan-covered steeps on the opposite side of the valley. Presently the sparkle of a long brass-banded gun-barrel betrays a Moorish hunter ambushed

in the rocks near the river bed, and soon we come across twenty or thirty native hunters posted in various coigns of vantage near a long pool where the game is expected to break cover. Their welcome is far from effusive, for your country Moor regards Nazarenes as contemptible and even accursed creatures, but we thaw them by exhibiting our breech-loaders. Nothing can possibly astonish or interest the native mind more than the extraordinary incomprehensible sight of "a gun that opens in the middle."

Then we asked about the prospects of the day's sport; "were pigs plentiful?" Plentiful! why, we should see pigs by droves, regiments, battalions, countless legions, in about an hour. In fact, the surrounding scenery would be completely obscured by ubiquitous pig. This was so comforting that we lit another pipe, regretting only that we had not brought a couple of thousand cartridges apiece. The consul having selected as his station a low, rocky ledge above the long pool, I join a gray-bearded Moor who was crouching in the shade of

some white-broom bushes on the other side. I hear the old boy muttering, *Allâh ijib*, God bring them; that is, the pigs. And so say I, but, meanwhile permit me to offer a few remarks on the boars of Southern Marocco.

Boar shooting is the sport *par excellence* of the Moor. Up to the last century spears were used, made of heavy, tough wood, with blades half a yard in length and crossbars at their sockets. But at the present time, pig-sticking is only practised at Tangier, where—Rule Britannia!—the field is not seldom led by Her Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Marocco. In the southern provinces, however, the open country is generally too stony, and the cover too thick and thorny, to allow of riding the pig down. So he is shot.* Sometimes a single hunter lies in wait near moonlit pool or stream to pot the "father of tusks." Sometimes, several hundred men turn out for a "drive," or

* Occasionally the boar is run down by dogs, or, more rarely, captured in pit-falls.

"surround," which would seem to threaten the utter extermination of all the pigs in the neighbourhood. But their numbers, so prolific are they, never seem to decrease. A couple of English sportsmen, camping last year not more than thirty miles from this spot, bagged in three months—not shooting daily—no less than fifty-three head; while another European resident, hunting four or five times a month, bagged in the course of last year eighty-two boar. Such facts as these only require to be known to attract British sportsmen who wander farther and often fare worse, to the argan-woods of Southern Marocco. In the provinces of Soos, Haha, and Shiadma, where nearly every man owns a gun and a gaunt hound, pigs are especially numerous, proving how effectually they are preserved (game-laws do not exist there) by their nocturnal habits and savage reputation. In truth, a full-grown boar—three feet six inches from hoof to shoulder, and over six feet from snout to tail, and weighing some thirty stone—is a precious ugly customer when wounded.

To see him at bay—ha! that is a sight to make

the boldest heart beat quicker. His rear guarded by a thorny bush, he fronts the yelling dogs with tusks that gleam in the moonlight. His small eyes flash luridly. Foam flecks his jaws, and the erect bristles of his neck seem stiff with rage.

> On his bow-back he hath a battle set
> Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes;
> His eyes, like glow-worms, shine when he doth fret;
> His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes;
> Being moved, he strikes whate'er is in his way,
> And whom he strikes his cruel tushes slay.

Let him but sight you, then, with a grunt that rises into a scream of fury, instantly at lightning speed he charges in a way calculated to discompose the very strongest nerves, even to the extent of "blue funk"—from ultramarine to indigo. If your hand trembles a hair's breadth, if your bullet or slugs fail to stop the boar's mad rush, the betting is in favour of the pig at long odds, at least ten to one on tusks against clubbed gun or hunting-knife. If you can't "shin up" a tree, say your prayers. I will not attempt to describe the amount of comfort which, under such circumstances, is to be found even

in the very thorniest of argan trees. Not only is the boar a precious ugly customer when living, but also, I may add, a precious tough customer when dead. His flesh, prohibited in the Table Chapter of the Koran, is rarely eaten by the Moors of the towns, but is frequently consumed by the country people. But, in my opinion, much culinary skill is needed to render palatable the lean and stringy meat of all but the suckling; which reminds me that I once saw in the stables of the governor of Haha a litter of young boar,* preserved there to guard his other animals against all malign influences, for evil spirits are irresistibly attracted and absorbed by pig. In fact, Moorish superstition considers even the tusk of the boar a potent charm against the dreaded "evil eye." But *revenons à nos cochons.*

From my lurking-place beneath the white-broom

* Be it known unto you that for the first few weeks of its existence, the infant boar wears a grayish drab coat with chocolate stripes, which he subsequently changes, first for the reddish bristles of adolescence, and finally for the dark silver-gray of full-blown boarhood.

bushes on the bank, I catch glimpses of the motley drapery and flashing weapons of the long line of Moorish hunters ambushed in the gray crags above. Fifty yards in front low argan trees cover gentle acclivities which, half a mile away, rise steeper, more rugged, more densely wooded, and scarred by deep corries, up to a ridge of rocks (perhaps one thousand three hundred feet high), boldly outlined against the pale azure of the cloudless sky. On the other side of that ridge, far below, the mob of beaters must by this time have commenced the "drive." Inexpressibly pleasant to me, reclining luxuriously in the cool shade of the broom-bushes, is the reflection that at the present moment four or five score of fellow-creatures are laboriously climbing up the opposite side of that hill, struggling through "bush, brake, and scaur," perspiring, yelling, and, doubtless, cursing, all the ancestors of the Nazarenes for whose special delectation the hunt has been instituted.

> Propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
> How sweet, while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly—

how passing sweet is the lotos of idlesse, particularly when eaten at other people's expense. Now and again capricious breezes, brimful of sunshine and faint woodland scents, flutter through the winding glen, ruffling for an instant the sparkling serenity, the molten silver, of the isolated pools. Presently a specially pastoral look is imparted to the scenery by a flock of vagrant goats slowly browsing their way along the bank of the river, and guarded by a handsome shepherd-lad, staff in hand, with lustrous dark eyes, keen thoroughbred profile, and graceful tawny limbs, half-draped in most poetic patchwork—a truly Arcadian picture—suggestive of David tending his father's flocks; or of an "elegant extract" from the "Idylls of Theocritus" or from Tennysonian verse, that tells how

> Beautiful Paris,
> Leading a jet-black goat, white horn'd, white hooved,
> Came up from reedy Simois.

Then half-a-dozen swarthy striplings, doffing their striped cloaks hastily, plunge with shrill laughter into a lower pool, splashing each other

with an enthusiasm that cannot fail to scare to the verge of insanity the barbel, eels, and tiny shebbel, which dwell in its depths. Seeing that the noisy merriment of the youngsters is not checked by the hunters, who themselves are talking loudly in their ambuscade, I judge that we shall have some time to wait for the appearance of the game—an opinion which seems to be shared by Her Britannic Majesty's representative perched up on that ledge, for H.B.M.R. is devoting himself to the slow combustion of "golden leaf" with an air of dignified resignation, as of one accustomed to official delays and bores of all sorts. So I will occupy the interval by narrating a little adventure which befell the consul and myself some years ago on the banks of a stream about fifty miles to the south of this spot.

In the vague hope of getting a shot at some thirsty "father of tusks," we most injudiciously —for at that time our ignorance of Arabic approached perfection—ventured, without any attendants, on an excursion by moonlight up the

oleander-fringed banks of the little Oued Kseb. No sooner had we started than gathering clouds malignantly extinguished the crescent of the Prophet and shrouded the landscape in mist and drizzle. Nevertheless, trusting the sky might clear, on we went, following the devious course of the stream for a couple of miles, until we saw the ruddy gleam of a fire among some ruins on the opposite bank, to which, in order to avoid certain steep sand-hills, we waded, hoping to escape the notice of the denizens of the ruins. (For the province of Haha was at that period considerably "disturbed;" that is, in non-official language, a good deal of highway robbery and a few murders were enlivening the dull routine of provincial existence.) But on gaining the farther bank we were promptly hailed in evidently hostile tones by a couple of Arabs, whose forms were but dimly discernible as they ran towards us through the mist. "Halloo! Halloo!" shouted we. Several chunks of rock hurtling past our heads and two faint flashes came by way of reply. It is, indeed, awful to reflect that if the mist and rain had not

damped the coarse native powder in the pans of their flint-lock guns, a calamity affecting the highest interests of Great Britain might there and then have occurred. For the Foreign Office might have lost an idolised consul, and the public might have lost—"if ye have tears, prepare to shed them now"—Moorish Lotos Leaves!

How our assailants discovered that we were no thieves, intent on stealing their pumpkins or maize, but merely "mad Christians," how they subsequently regaled us—by way of peace-offering—with a kind of sweet cucumber, how we vainly tried to sleep the rest of the night in the pelting rain, how we sneaked ignominiously back to Mogador as soon as the town-gates were opened, I have no time to tell, for the gray-bearded hunter at my side attracts my attention, with an eager gesture, to a hawk which hovers yonder above the rocky ridge: "*Ja el halloof*, the pigs are coming," he exclaims; "God bring them!" The other native hunters, too, evidently expect the immediate appearance of the boar, for some are examining the priming of their guns,

and others are anxiously scanning the distant ridge, all talking excitedly the while in tones that must have been distressingly audible to every pig in the vicinity.

Suddenly a shout of triumph is heard, chorused by every hunter, and my gray-bearded friend, clutching me impulsively, points to a dark object clearly defined against the sky, and looking no larger than a guinea-pig, which is trotting along the summit of the ridge. The old boy promptly curses the pig, and clears for action by kicking his slippers off, re-priming his gun, and slinging the curved dagger at his side more forward so as to be handy at need. Then he mumbled what seemed to be a kind of prayer for the safety of some incomprehensible creature he called "Mirjana."

Another shout! The excitement grows more intense, the gestures more wild, as another pig, and another, and four more, and three others, straggling along the ridge, rapidly vanish in the thick cover. I feel conscious of something ridiculous in an enthusiasm which culminates in pig; but I reserve

for calmer moments the study of the philosophy of Bacon.

Dropping shots ring from the far side of the ridge, and the hubbub of the beaters grows louder as the foremost gain the crest of the hill, pausing there till joined by the rest. Then, with a burst of yells, the long line of beaters sweeps slowly downwards towards us, their fluttering garments contrasting finely with the dark-green foliage of the argans and the gray rocks. Brilliant flashes and puffs of white smoke light up the sombre slopes here and there as shot after shot echoes down the valley. Coveys of partridges, repeatedly flushed, dash wildly scattering from point to point. Almost simultaneously in three places the hounds give tongue, vociferously cheered on by the beaters. Then the hunters on the bank yell like demons, as a boar tears down the hillside, closely followed by a large black dog at top-speed. Several shots are fired at the pig as he crashes down the bank, plunges into the long pool, swims across, rushing up the opposite side, charging right through a group of hunters,

escaping their hurried volley, and vanishing among the thickets with that grim black dog in resolute pursuit about a yard in his rear. More and more clamorous grows the uproar on the hillside, quicker and quicker flash the guns, as the beaters, their line broken into half-a-dozen different parties, rush up, down, along the slopes after half a score of pigs.

Then tremendous yells on our side greet another boar coming straight towards the consul; but, before he gets within range, he is turned in my direction by a red dog, which is loudly cheered by the name of Mirjana by the gray-bearded hunter. Both boar and dog are evidently considerably pumped. The old hunter and myself creep forward near some open ground stretching across the boar's probable course. Yes; on he comes, and, not seeing us, dashes out of the argan-cover into the open, not forty yards away, the red dog close behind. A nice easy shot, for he is only going at a kind of slow gallop. He is my pig to a dead certainty, think I, drawing a bead just in front of his left shoulder, and just beginning to press the trigger, when, to my utter

amazement and horror, a brown wrinkled hand is laid upon my gun-barrels, and a voice tremulous with excitement exclaims: "Don't shoot, O Consul; you will kill Mirjana!" Would it have been justifiable homicide, I wonder, if I had slaughtered that old idiot on the spot? But his attitude was so ludicrous, his anxiety about that confounded Mirjana so tragic, that wrath melted into fits of laughter. Besides, it was very soothing to be addressed as "Consul."

Meanwhile, the pig and dog were toiling up a rather steep brae, about three hundred yards off. Then a most comic scene occurred. Piggy deliberately sat down, and Mirjana sat down opposite, a couple of yards away; both too utterly exhausted to do more than gasp and stare at each other. After about fifteen seconds' interval for refreshment, piggy rose and trotted slowly on, Mirjana trotting slowly in rear, and passed out of sight down the glen, followed by most of the hunters and beaters. Whereupon the consul descended from his post on the ledge, and rejoined me, giving vent at the same time

to some very strong comments on the depravity of "that red dog." I feel sure that Mirjana narrowly escaped being committed "for contempt of court."

Completely disgusted with his bad luck, the consul handed his gun to a servant, and I, hoping to get a shot at some blue-rocks, changed ball-cartridges for shot. Walking homewards down the glen we saw on the opposite hillside a group of Moors clustered round a dead boar. Wishing to show their trophy to the consul, they began dragging it down-hill through the bushes, when suddenly out burst a fine boar, dashing across the river-bed not thirty yards in front of us. The consul's servant had loitered behind; and long before his Eminence could regain his gun, and before I could change shot-cartridges for ball, the boar had disappeared. I fear—I very much fear—that I uttered a word beginning with a "big, big D." And then a most extraordinary phenomenon occurred. I heard the word distinctly repeated with startling emphasis. As among the bystanders only his Excellency and myself spoke English, I was in-

clined for the moment to believe his Serene Highness had followed the evil example of Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. But the sound *may* have been—I mean, *must* have been—produced by a truly remarkable echo. That boar, however, was ultimately shot, and another also; but no amount of gore could obliterate the recollection of, as his Sublimity tersely phrased it, "our nigger luck" in that day's boar shooting in Southern Marocco.

G. D. C.

III.

CANOE RAMBLES IN MOGADOR BAY.

THE *Pearl* was the first canoe ever imported into Marocco; so the sensation she caused was simply —as Dominie Sampson would say—"prodigious." She became at once a nine days' wonder, and was the absorbing topic of conversation in all the coffee shops, barbers' shops, and baths of Mogador. Grave old Arabs wagged their snowy beards as if they knew all about canoes, but declined on principle to satisfy the curiosity of the ignorant vulgar. Crowds of Moorish Jews (who, like Douglas Jerrold, "dote upon the sea—from the shore") narrowly inspected the *Pearl*, and, with meaning smiles, hinted that she was admirably constructed for the purpose of defrauding the revenue of the Sultan! The most

idiotic questions were shouted out, and the most ridiculous conjectures were hazarded in reply. If I had purposed to go down into the great waters, like Macbeth's witch, in a sieve, the mob could not have expressed greater astonishment. When they saw the *Pearl* give a long start and a hollow beating to one of their clumsy eight-oared boats, they promptly nicknamed her "the child of a steamer." When they saw her speeding along over shallows where their own boats could not find water enough, they seemed to think that the *Pearl* was like that Yankee craft which was "warranted to float wherever a heavy dew had fallen." They proclaimed with one consent that the *Pearl's* owner was a suicidal maniac for venturing forth in such a cockle-shell, and my subsequent escapes from becoming — in Mantalini's words — "a moist, unpleasant body," they attributed to the direct agency of *Shaitan.*

It is pleasant at any time to run away, even for an hour or two, from the worries of this "wale of tears." But when there is famine in the land

and the pestilence walketh by noonday, it is doubly pleasant to escape for awhile from the miseries ashore—from the sight of eyes that glare wolfishly at food, of bodies festering with small-pox, of limbs wasted to mere skin and bone, of the mute anguish of despair, of the score of corpses daily carried from the town-gate to the burial-place at the old saint-house on the beach, by mourners who, to-morrow, may themselves be mourned over.

To-day, at least, in my canoe, I will forget my poor fellow-creatures raking out grains of corn one by one from heaps of refuse, and wrangling like Moorish curs over a bone. I will forget that men fall down from weakness and die in the streets, and that they murder each other for a few copper coins. I will forget the horrible rumours that "strange flesh" has been eaten, and that parents are selling their children for bread.

Good-bye to pain and care! I take mine ease to-day;
Here where these sunny waters break,
And ripples the soft breeze. I shake
All burdens from my heart, all weary thoughts away.

It is certainly a lovely day for a canoe ramble. The sun just rising in unclouded splendour over the distant hills, is sprinkling the gray robe of dawn with aerial gold, and gradually lights up the lofty minarets, the white flat-roofed houses, and the high white battlements (studded at intervals with square towers and massive arched gateways) which gird the town.* Early though it be, a number of ragged lads and lasses, looking, poor wretches, for the most part desperately gaunt, have assembled to watch the departure of the *Pearl* from the Water-port, and urge me to race a Moorish boat on the point of starting on a fishing cruise. But I politely

* It seems probable that the modern Mogador, founded in 1760 by Sultan Mohammed ben Abdallah ben Ismael, was built on the site of an ancient town of the same name, marked in the Catalanian map of 1375, in Houdin's Atlas Minor, 1608, and in one of the maps in Pory's translation (1625) of the works of Leo Africanus. Soueira, the name bestowed upon the town by its imperial founder in allusion to its picturesque position, means an "image" or "picture." (In the dialect of the mountaineers the town is called *Tassurt*, or the pretty little picture—so Rohlfs says.) It is a picture that owes its chromatic effect to four brilliant hues: zinc-white for the ramparts and flat-roofed houses, ultramarine for the

decline the challenge, preferring the endurance of any amount of public criticism to muscular exertion. In lazy mood I let the *Pearl* drift with the ebbing tide, while I light the after-breakfast cigarette, and search the side-lockers to ascertain whether a certain flask is stowed away securely beneath some sandwiches and dates.

A pouchful of Havana, a book of cigarette-papers, some matches, a smooth-bore, a fishing-rod, and an umbrella, which serves both as sunshade and sail, complete the equipment of "the pilgrim of the deep." No. I had almost forgotten to include a toy black-and-tan terrier, who sits on the prow, barking wildly at the sea-birds, and thereby not

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sky, cobalt for the Atlantic, and pale sienna for the sand. Built by a French engineer assisted by Spanish renegades (according to Richardson), Mogador displays less irregularity of construction and is less filthy than other Moorish cities, but has no buildings of any importance or beauty, although it is the principal seaport of Southern Marocco, with a population of about fifteen thousand. Nevertheless, though there is a great scarcity of foliage in and near the town, though the salient features of the scenery of the vicinity are unpoetic sandhills and rocks, Mogador has some claims —which I hope to indicate—to the title "Soueira."

seldom losing his balance and falling overboard, and then swimming, with distended eyeballs, in the wake of the canoe, till picked up with all the bark washed out of his body.

Surely Norna of the Fitful Head has lulled to sleep the north-west winds of this October month. Only an occasional cat's-paw ruffles the glassy serenity of the bay, making green buds of waves bloom into white froth flowers. On a calm day like this, the sea assumes a pellucid, ultramarine colour, and sunset tips its ridges with emeralds and its grooves with purples. But the shifting clouds, the various currents, may dye it indigo, slate-gray, or a score of delicate *nuances*. If the day be stormy, you will hear the "league-long roller thundering on the reef"—strangely different from the "low moan" of British seas.

But for the swish of the tide as the stem of the *Pearl* cleaves its way, the silence seems absolute. Yet ever and anon, as I listen, I catch the faint song of distant Moorish fishermen, the flash of their rhythmic oars, the barking note of sea-gull

hovering inquisitively overhead, the hoarse expostulation of the carrion-crow, the dull report of shot-gun in the marsh, the shrill flight of the scared velvet-duck, the far-off lowing of cattle, and "the myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl."

I watch the shadows of filmy, snowy clouds drifting across the still waters, and the long caravans of camels and mules wending their way townwards across the yellow sands. A couple of naked Moors are giving their masters' horses their morning bath, not far from where a dead mule affords bones of contention to a mob of mangy curs and clamorous crows.

Just where the wavelets ripple on the beach, a flock of sand-pipers are seeking their food sportively, and covering the sand with tiny, triple-toed footprints. Now a wave catches and floats them on its summit. Now they pursue it in retreat. Surely they are the Shakspearean elves, that on the sands

> Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
> When he comes back.

Never were such active little birds, incessantly on the move, running, swimming, diving, fluttering,

with the daintiest grace. In several spots the shore is bright with snowy shells and sparkling stones, agates, and flints, and crystals, and here and there a shard of painted Moorish pottery, or a plain earthenware fragment, which

> Doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange,

by the embroidery of lichens and the friction of the waves. At other spots the tide has strewn the beach with all manner of flotsam and jetsam; small pink sponges, olive-tinted snake-stemmed weeds, *frutta di mare*, sea-grapes, piles of kelp, sea-wrack, sea-lace, sea-tangle, and eel-grass.

Paddling southwards down the bay, one passes in quick succession the Moorish cemeteries, the high-fenced gardens, the aqueduct, the picturesque sanctuary of Sidi Mogodul,* the uninhabited palace of the Sultan, the tiny hamlet of Diabat, and the adjacent ruins of an old Portuguese fort. About midway between the fort and the village a fresh-water rivulet flows seaward, growing shallower by

* Hence is derived, it is said, the European name of the town.

degrees in its onward course among the quicksands, until at last, quite lost, it dies in the effort to carry its little tribute to the bay. The broad concave shore rises into sand-dunes and high stony hills, crested with stunted trees and patches of brushwood. Over these hills, far inland, soar the faintly-outlined peaks of towering Atlas. Landwards, the southernmost point is Cape Tagheriwelt. The westerly side of the town is protected by formidable reefs of rocks and a small island, between which and a larger island to the south-west, lies the entrance to the bay. North-westerly, the scenery grows bolder and more rugged for a couple of miles. Thence half a score of miles broad, in-curving beach stretch to the base of the lofty Iron Mountain, at the verge of the northern horizon. Close to the north-easterly gate you see the unenclosed Jewish burial-ground, thronged with white tombstones, shaped like sarcophagi, lying flat upon the graves:

> How strange it seems! These Hebrews in their graves,
> Close by the street of this fair seaport town,
> Silent beside the never-silent waves,
> At rest in all this moving up and down!

A few hundred yards beyond, almost on the shore, is a sand-hill, from the sides whereof bleached human bones protrude—the Christian cemetery of the days, possibly, when Nazarenes, captured by Moorish pirates, were sold as slaves in the market.

As for the bay, it is a quaint little nook of a bay. Two or three times a month its solitude is invaded by fussy steamers, and in the course of the year perhaps a score of small schooners and brigs may cast anchor in its sands. At such times the sedate and placid citizens will be seized with spasms of industry; the water-port will be crowded with bales of goatskins and esparto-grass, with barrels of olive and argan oil, with packages of almonds and gums, all of which are gradually transferred, with much noise, from the custom-house to the cargo-boats, and thence, with still more noise, to the hold of sailing vessel or steamer. Then tranquillity falls upon the town; the lightermen become fishermen again; the water-port is deserted; and in the intervals of slumber we indulge in languid speculations as to the advent of the next ship from London or Marseilles.

Between the outer reef and the seaward town-battery lies a lagoon, my favourite cruising-ground, generally calm and clear, even when a fresh breeze is blowing. There, among jutting crags, all shaggy with marine mosses, lie translucent pools, in the depths whereof the eye may delightedly scan pale-green sea-groves, with starry buds, "the sea-blooms, and oozy woods which wear the sapless foliage of ocean;" crimson shells with silvery spikes, dainty little cowries, the prismatic "Venus' ear," and others which seem in their lustrous beauty to have caught the sheen of the sun that sets in the Atlantic. In and out among the brilliant anemones and bristling sea-urchins, which enamel these grottoes and gardens of ocean, darts the mailed shrimp, and crawls the sidling soldier-crab; and amidst

> All the dry pied things that be
> In the hueless mosses under the sea,

that little mollusc, the tenant of the multivalve shell meekly uplifts its fringe of *cirri* in mute appeal against the ancient calumny that

> Barnacles turn Poland geese
> In th' islands of the Orcades.

In the dark recesses of the pool lurks the voracious octopus, like a giant spider in its web; and limpets, and hermits, and sea-slugs, and (for all I know) Münchausen's "periwinkle-shrubs and lobster-trees." Far down among the weeds which radiate and interlace their wavy meshes in the limpid pool, or arabesque the pebbly bottom with intricate and motley tracery, glide shoals of tiny bass, mullet, bream, blennies, and wrasse. So full of life is this miniature ocean, that Milton's lines come to my memory:

> Each creek and bay
> With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
> Of fish that with their fins and shining scales
> Glide under the green wave; . . .
> . . . Part single, or with mate,
> Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves
> Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
> Show to the sun their waved coats dropped with gold;
> Or in their pearly shells at ease, attend
> Moist nutriment; or, under rocks, their food
> In jointed armour watch.

Once or twice I have caught a glimpse in the still water of a rusty cannon-ball; a relic of the Prince de Joinville's bombardment of the town in 1844.

Suddenly the shadow of a bird glides across the pool, and an eldritch laugh falls on my ear. Glancing up, I see the laughing gull, or kittiwake; and forthwith I remember the Scotchman who, having heard that those birds were admirable whets, ate six of them, and subsequently complained that "he was no hungrier than when he began."

Look at that cormorant on the edge of the rocks. Saw you ever such a quaint solemnity of mien, such ludicrous affectation of importance? Flapping his pinions to dry them in the sunshine, he looks for all the world like a winged sweep, or, as Shelley puts it—

> Like the wreck of some wind-wandering
> Fragment of inky thunder-smoke!

These birds—great pets of mine—are highly social in their habits, and perch in groups upon the outer reefs, where they seem to hold mysterious conclaves on the science of angling. If one believed the doctrine of metempsychosis, these amphibious soot-bags are black enough to be inhabited by the souls of Day and Martin, or even of parsons. I

speak with all reverence of the cloth; but these sable fishers wear a look of portly and pious reflectiveness worthy of bishops and deans, and suggestive of tithes and fat livings meet for the fishers of men. (Why does John Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," make Satan perch on the topmost branch of the Tree of Life, "like a cormorant"?)

Another pet of mine is the storm-loving petrel—that sea-rover so prettily praised in Barry Cornwall's lyrical verse—which skims the wave-crests with rapid flutterings.

Towards the end of September the paddler, armed with the usual central-fire, may get tolerable sport among migratory ducks, teal, widgeon, pintail, scoter, and half-a-dozen other varieties. Occasionally I have sighted black velvet-ducks enjoying an afternoon siesta on the waves, and, paddling very quietly, I have deliberately potted them. Otherwise, they are difficult to approach, and

> Vainly the fowler's eye
> Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
> As, darkly-painted on the crimson sky,
> Thy figure floats along.

By good luck you may chance to hear the piercing trumpet-note of the rose-coloured flamingo, winging its way to sequestered haunts far up the wooded river, among the hills and vales of Haha—the home of the boar and jackal, partridge and lapwing.

That Moorish fisherman on yonder crag that juts into the sea is, in his way, a model such as Murillo would have delighted to paint. A tall, lean, cut-throat fellow, with gleaming black eyes, a nose like the beak of a fish-eagle, and a high, narrow forehead. On his bare arms and legs the muscles show like ropes as he sways his thirty-foot bamboo-rod; a statue in bronze on a pedestal of rock. Beneath him flashes the foam of a flowing tide. At his feet glistens a small pile of silvery fish, delicate Bou Brahim,* and black and gray bream. Just observe his angling apparatus. Would you not swear that Ham and Shem fished from the ark with similar tackle? Before coming to close quarters with my swarthy friend, I carefully gain the weather-gage,

* I cannot ascertain why the Bou Brahim is called "Father of Abraham."

for his scanty garments, however picturesque their "loop'd and window'd raggedness," emit "an ancient and a fish-like smell." He is, I know well, a man of taciturn manners, inclined to resent observation and to repel curiosity. So I hasten to propitiate him with an offering of tobacco, which splits his grim physiognomy into absolutely friendly smiles. His don't-bother-me air degenerates into obsequious cordiality, and he says, "Keef enta?"—"how d'ye do?"—as if he really felt anxious to know. But after borrowing some matches and cigarette-papers, he ungratefully ignores my presence, and feigns to be totally absorbed in the contemplation of the beauties of nature and the details of his art. When the tide ebbs, he is generally to be seen wading through the shallows with his robe girded far higher than our Lord Chamberlain would approve, transfixing flat-fish with a kind of barbarous harpoon. Or else, armed with a primitive gaff, he hooks out from its retreat in rocky pool the hideous octopus, his favourite fishing-bait, except the cray-fish and the lobster, which he calls appropriately "the

scorpion of the sea." At other times, he collects at low-tide mussels, barnacles, and limpets, the ground-bait for the morrow's fishing; or, if he chance to own a hand-net, he goes a-shrimping, that Europeans may not lack the fitting sauce for the "fish of Moses," as he terms the sole; because—so runs native tradition—when Moses smote the Red Sea with his rod, he chanced to split a sole into two halves; as is amply proved by the fact that the under side of the fish remains white and raw even to the present day: which reminds one of O. W. Holmes' "Verses for After Dinner:"

> The fish called the flounder, perhaps you may know,
> Has one side for use and another for show;
> One side for the public, a delicate brown,
> And one that is white, which he always keeps down.

With a sweep of the paddle I turn the *Pearl* southwards, leaving the lagoon and the little island for the channel.

The chief drawbacks to canoeing here are the sharks (the blue, the gray, and the hammer-head), and the suddenness with which the sea gets up.

It is no exaggeration to say that in the space of thirty minutes, the perfectly calm channel between the main island and the lesser islet at the entrance of the bay will occasionally become whitened with heavy, chopping seas. Such cross-waves are most perilous to canoes, and in case of capsize, the voyageur runs a risk of a cruise in a ground-shark's stomach to that Davy Jones's locker from which no mariner (save Jonah and Tom Thumb) returns. For my own part, I shrink morbidly from the prospect of exploring any piscine "interior," and from being presented with the freedom of the "sea-lawyer's" corporation. The sight of a back-fin sticking up a foot or so above water unpleasantly suggests that—

'Twas on the broad Atlantic,
In the equinoctial gales,
A young fellow fell overboard,
Among the sharks and whales.

I remember, during one of those south-westerly gales which render the harbourage so perilous, the very narrow escape of a certain English steamer.

Having delayed her departure too long, a tremendous sea had sprung up in the channel, and curling rollers, rushing athwart the bay, threatened every moment to sweep her from her moorings. The anchor was almost up, and the agent's boat was just leaving the steamer's side, when it was caught by a huge billow, flung aloft, capsized, and almost smashed. From the shore, two of the Moors were seen clinging to the side ladder; of the others nothing could be seen. Then the steamer appeared to be drifting rapidly on to a reef; sea after sea striking her and covering the decks with water. When almost touching the reef she seemed to stop, then to plunge heavily away towards the channel, pitching and rolling so heavily as almost to show her keel. For a time we thought that never could she struggle through the breakers in the channel. No sooner, however, had she gained the roadstead than she stopped. An accident—so it turned out—to her boilers. Had that occurred ten minutes earlier, shipwreck would have been inevitable. All the boat's crew, I may add, were picked up.

Neither in the channel nor in the bay are there any buoys; nor is there a lighthouse on the island.* The fact that there is not one single buoy or beacon on the coast south of Spartel may serve to convey some faint idea of the barbarism of the Moorish Government.† The pharos on Cape Spartel would never have been erected but for European energies, nor would it be maintained save by foreign contributions. Wrecks are, therefore, so frequent, that it is asserted if any rascally shipowner wishes a heavily-insured "sea-coffin" to be lost, he selects the Marocco coast as most favourable for the operation. New vessels are rarely lost—a significant coincidence. Nothing but the maxim, "The greater the truth, the greater the libel," prevents my illustrating, by a string of anecdotes, the roguery which occasionally characterises shipwrecks on this sea-

* Marocco has neither a mercantile marine nor a navy.

† "The wreckers of this coast," says Richardson in his "Travels in Marocco," "boldly assert that a shipwreck is a blessing sent to them by Providence. The port authorities have even the impudence to declare that to erect lighthouses would be thwarting the decrees of Divine Providence."

board, not merely in the actual loss of the vessel, but also in the sale of the salvage. "There be land-rats and water-rats."

Paddling across the channel, I draw up to one of the eight-oared fishing-boats, and on asking "What sport?" the Moors smilingly point to the bottom of their boat, where, if there is an ounce, there is piled a couple of hundredweight of fish—a right royal bag. Dainty gray bream, and the coarser black, light pink snappers (ranging from three to a dozen pounds), three or four fathoms of conger and *muræna*, a brace of crayfish, a fine show of Bou Brahim, two red "stump noses," some pouting and wrasse, and one enormous skate, which would scale quite fifty pounds.

The native fisherman of to-day has not the luck of the angling fraternity in the "Thousand and One Tales," for he has never yet hauled up a brazen vase, tenanted by a jin; nor a fish like Cogia Hassan's, containing a Koh-i-noor; nor even "the dead body of a young odalisque, cut in small pieces," though he occasionally nets, after a storm,

a human limb or two. But I have seen him catch wonderful fish, shaped like perch, with zebra-stripes of black and gold, and a spotted dogfish, a hideous monster, rosetted like a leopard. One might almost expect him to hook the rainbow fish of the Enchanted Lake, in the kingdom of the Black Isles.

Some years ago enormous shoals of *tasargelt*, a fish bearing a strong resemblance to a mackerel, but of a far daintier flavour, and of an average weight of seven pounds, frequented the bay. Vast quantities were sold and hawked about the town, or salted and sold to Arabs of the interior; and fishermen waxed fat, and made comparative fortunes, until one fatal day a swarm of envious landlubbers, arming themselves with hook and line, went down into the great waters, and made such tremendous bags, that fish became a drug in the markets; and, rapidly putrefying, created such a frightful stench, that the governor, holding his nose with his fingers, ordered all the fish to be cast into the sea. *O giorno infelice!* Rarely indeed from that time forth has a tasargelt been caught in Mogador Bay.

Now and again the *Pearl* has been surrounded by a school of unwieldy porpoises—"sea-hogs," the sailor calls them—gambolling so near that the paddle touches them, and shipwreck seems imminent; and once or twice, encompassed by myriads of sardines, the canoe seemed to float in molten silver. Not unfrequently a shoal of thunny, or *azalimza*, is descried outside the bay, when every available boat gives chase, in a kind of impromptu regatta. The azalimza is an immense coarse fish, like a rock-cod. Its Spanish name is *corbina*. It is a very accomplished fish. It sings very well indeed. About two years ago, returning to England, *viâ* Lisbon, in the S.S. *Risca*, and anchoring in the Tagus, the skipper thereof and myself were much exercised one evening by a continuous humming noise, a deep musical murmur, that seemed to come from the engine-room. An inspection of the hold convinced us that the mysterious melody rose from the river-bed. Of the various suggestions offered as to its cause, "mermaids" seemed the least unsatisfactory. But happening to mention the phenomenon to a

Barbary Jew (resident in Lisbon), who came on board next morning, he solved the riddle with the word, "Azalimza."

After watching my Moorish friends hauling in a few more fish, I paddle across the channel towards the "Big Island," as the natives call it—though it cannot be more than three-quarters of a mile in length, and one-third as broad. (Its name on charts is simply Mogador Island.)* It is used as an asylum or penitentiary for Moorish drunkards, who are fitly punished for their propensity to indulge in hot and rebellious liquors by being surrounded with cold water. The island may, therefore, be regarded as the Moorish Government's hydropathic establishment, for the cure of those depraved Moslims who have disobeyed the precepts about strong drink contained in the *Cow* and *Table* chapters of the

* There is a local tradition that the island once, "within the memory of the oldest inhabitant," was connected with the mainland by an isthmus. But in a map of the year 1608 there is marked "I. Domegador." Rohlfs says it is also laid down in a map of 1375.

Koran, which expressly state that "wine is an abomination of the work of Satan;" and which might supply Sir Wilfrid Lawson with arguments as fatal to the bottle as favourable to the pump. As the island-census presents the phenomenon of a population exclusively of the male gender, it may be inferred that compulsory celibacy is included among Moorish specifics for dipsomania. But scandal insinuates the soft impeachment that the governor of the island himself is a very sad dog indeed, under the rose; that smuggled liquors are not the only contraband goods he winks at; and calumny (whose breath not even governors can 'scape) whispers that Sidi Abou Aza's Good-Templarship gets "half-seas over" and "three sheets in the wind," when spirits come across the vasty deep—in bottles.

Until the bombardment of 1844, the tight little island was the chief State prison—the *Château d'If*—of the Empire of Marocco. That a spot so far from the two political centres of the kingdom should have been selected for the internment of political offenders and scapegoats, seems

strange enough to need explanation. When the Moorish Government arrested a traitorous basha, or captured a rebel sheikh (even in the remotest northern province), it was deemed a diplomatic stroke to despatch such State prisoners—strongly guarded and often brutally manacled—to the island-gaol, situated nigh the southernmost boundaries of the Sultanate, because thereby the power of His Shereefian Majesty was so widely advertised, that sprouting seditions were nipped in the bud. Occasionally, when some old screw of a governor ventured to diminish his annual subscription to the imperial exchequer, he, too, would be sent into banishment on the island, never thence to be released until he had disgorged the uttermost *mouzouna*. Such a salutary example naturally inspired all other governors, for the time being, with a loyal liberality, which promptly filled to overflowing the coffers of the Sultan.

That was the period during which the most excruciating tortures were inflicted in the prisons and dungeons of Marocco. Even at this present day, the reputation of wealth is perilous. *Then*

[redacted]

Paddling quietly, I have neared the south-eastern extremity of the tight little island, where there is a little patch of sand on which the *Pearl* is safely beached. On one occasion, which I am not likely to forget, my perfidious bark, "built in the eclipse," turned turtle on this very spot what time vaulting ambition tempted me to essay a passage through some miniature breakers. Need I tell the harrowing tale how, in mid-career, a curling wave broke upon the *Pearl*; how a certain paddler lost his balance, and toppled over sidelong into the surf; how he regained and righted his capsized craft; how he seated himself therein with much difficulty and loss of dignity; how he dauntlessly, but injudiciously, again dashed at the rollers, only again to be upset? No! Let it suffice impertinent curiosity to know that never to this day has that wretched man recovered from the derisive condolences of enemies, and the facetious affection of friends, whose unanimous verdict was: "*Surf* him right!"

No sooner do I step ashore, than I am hailed by the governor of the island, *Cidi* ("my lord") Abou Aza,

who, seeing the approach of the *Pearl*, awaits me on the beach with his suite of gaol-birds, of whom two are bidden to carry the canoe to the small battery on the rocks above, where, sheltered from the sun, it may remain till my island-ramble of to-day be ended. Meanwhile, the governor welcomes me with a grasp of the hand, raising his fingers to his lips, and then leads the way over the rocks up to his house. In his holiday suit, from a rear point of view, he resembles a yellow-footed snowball;* for his voluminous haïk, draped around his figure in toga-fashion, and fluttering in the breeze, is as immaculately white as the turban wreathed around his fez; his slippers are saffron-hued; his gait is dignified; his movements, unfettered by buttons, are full of easy grace, and his flowing costume gives the portly presence so characteristic of the well-dressed native. But his hail-fellow-well-met manner lacks that Vere-de-Vere repose which stamps the genuine Moorish grandee, and his clear-cut face wears

* A singularly rare phenomenon.

a very shixty-per-shent look. The governor's salary is not large. Four or five dollars a month—say, ten pounds per annum—is a decidedly limited official emolument. But all (or nearly all) Moorish authorities are underpaid. Consequently the revenue of the Sultan suffers. Justice becomes literally a matter of sale and barter, and Law, with itching palm, suspends *behind* the judgment-divan a list of crimes, together with a scale of prices! My lord Abou Aza is, alas! no better than he should be, but he is at least no worse than other Moorish jacks-in-office. In fact, he cannot be as bad, because his opportunities are few, and his pickings are, at most, mere "unconsidered trifles."

Notwithstanding the overpowering dignity of his position, my noble friend the governor (if he will allow me to bask in the glory of intimate acquaintanceship) has "no beastly pride about him." I have seen him unbend so far as to accept, with effusive gratitude, a few coppers, and the broken victuals of a picnic. Neither will he suffer his religious scruples to prevent his hobnobbing as

convivially with me as with a true believer. There are Nazarenes and Nazarenes, he would say, if called to account for tolerating the society of a Christian dog. It is true that all of them are rebels against Alláh, and the born foes of the "Faithful." It is true that they often shave the chin, but never the head; that they can't eat with their fingers, nor sit cross-legged, nor sleep with their clothes on, nor pray five times a day; neither can they abstain from the flesh of swine. But, after all, the English are not so utterly detestable as the rest of the Roumis, who never reward one for enduring their company by donations of tobacco, or even of the crumbs that fall from their tables. But by this time we have arrived at the governor's mansion, which he, with a wave of his hand, invites me to enter.

Passing through a low-arched doorway, we find ourselves in a small square court, on which open the three or four rooms of the single storey. The walls of the house and the walls of the rooms are whitewashed. There is whitewash on the floors, on the ceilings and roof. The furniture of the room is

conspicuous by its absence, except a few strips of coarse matting, an old striped rug, a few cooking utensils, a brass tray with tea-glasses thereon, a charcoal-stove, a fishing-rod and line, and a *gimbry*, or two-stringed Moorish banjo, to the astonishing discords of which instrument Abou perpetually warbles native ditties about the tender passion, with an enthusiasm not yet dissipated by matrimony. I remark the absence of soap and toilet materials. Neither are bedding nor a change of raiment visible. But as my lord the governor sleeps on a rug on the floor in his clothes (which he rarely doffs for purposes of ablution), he can dispense with brown Windsor and sheets. "Will you have a glass of green tea?" asks the hospitable Abou. "Not till the afternoon," I reply, while proffering a well-filled pocket-pistol to the governor, who, with a grin, and a cautious look round to assure himself that nobody was watching, half emptied it, and handed it back, with a smacking of lips. Then, refusing an offered cigarette, he brought out the tiniest of pipes with a short reed stem and red-clay bowl, the

size of a thimble, which he filled—from a small leather pouch—with a yellowish dust, the famous *keef*. From the earthenware charcoal-stove the smoker picks out with his horny fingers a live cinder to light the calumet of peace, and proceeds to inhale the bluish smoke with Oriental gravity. As the "dream-weed" evidently inclines my host to forty winks, I quit his residence, and wander into the adjacent battery. No sentry bars my way to the crescent-shaped rampart, which is said to have been constructed early in this century by Portuguese (some say Genoese) engineers, who were evidently no Vaubans. The fort is a fac-simile of four others, at different corners of the island. The thick parapet, faced with blocks of sandstone, is pierced for five guns, in rear of which are three small rooms, presumably intended for magazines. Three rusty thirty-two-pounders (formerly supported on brick-work, but now mounted like field-guns, on ponderous wooden carriages, with wheels of amazing clumsiness) peep through the embrasures. With the carelessness which characterises the Moor, a

chunk of rock laid on each touch-hole is its only protection against the weather.

In the eyes of the natives, these five pigmy batteries make the tight little island the Malta of Marocco, though only one of the forts has its full complement of five rusty guns. To hear soldiery and civilians alike bragging of the wretched ordnance, one would imagine every cannon was a Woolwich Infant, instead of being, in reality, a hollow mockery, imposing enough to look at, but dreadfully fatal to the artillerymen, did not common humanity prohibit target-practice. Twenty-five soldiers are supposed to form the garrison, on a peace footing; but they enjoy a merely nominal existence, though their pay is drawn with exceeding punctuality by a certain governor, whose name not even the rack shall induce me to disclose. There is just a flavour of the ridiculous in the idea of the batteries bristling with "quakers" and defended by dummies, which one respectable gunboat would knock into microscopic studies.

Looking down through one of the embrasures

of the battery, my attention is arrested by the sight of a dozen dismounted cannons—mostly thirty-two-pounders—half-imbedded in the gravel below high-water mark. For nearly forty years those guns have lain upon the beach. Salt water has long ago obliterated their inscriptions, eaten away their trunnions and cascabels, and honeycombed with rust their "adamantine lips." Yet these dilapidated cannons represent something more than mere masses of corroded gun-metal. They are commentaries to a page of Moorish history.

I should like to have been a spectator (at a safe distance) of the bombardment of Mogador on August 13th, 1844, when the "liners" and frigates, under the command of the Prince de Joinville, hurled 30,000 shot and shell into the town. Nor did the island escape scot-free. Three days later, its batteries, manned by nearly 500 Moorish soldiers, were considerably mauled by the heavy metal of the French flotilla; and no sooner was the fire of the Moorish cannoniers silenced, than two storming parties, 900 strong, landed simultaneously on oppo-

site sides of the island, and favoured the natives — caught in a *cul de sac* — with an exhaustive lesson in the sword and bayonet exercises. After a desperate resistance, hand-to-hand, nearly 300 of the garrison were slain, and the rest made prisoners, save two or three excellent swimmers, who, preferring cold water to cold steel or captivity, threw themselves into the bay, and succeeded in gaining the mainland. A few of the guns were dismounted, the remainder were spiked and rolled down the rocks into the sea.* For some time after-

* "When the French played powder on the town," said a Moorish soldier to J——, "and the townsfolk gave in, we were left on the island yonder. We had Christian cannon; why could we not fight the infidels? But the sons of Satan got into their boats and landed, and when our muskets were discharged, they rushed up with swords at the end of their rifles, and what could we do with our daggers? Three Moors swam across to the shore, and the rest were taken prisoners to Algiers. They put me in the hospital and fed me like a Sultan's son on white bread, and meat, and grapes, as much as ever I could eat, God bless them! When I was getting better, a man used to come twice or thrice a day and tell me to get up and *walk about*. 'What for?' said I, 'is not sitting better than standing, or standing better than walking?' you know our proverb."

wards, French cannon-balls were used to ballast vessels with, and to this day are used by some merchants of Mogador as scale-weights! "To what base uses we may return, Horatio!"

But though the Moors might have learned a little humility at the cannon's mouth, their deep-rooted belief in their national superiority has never been really shaken; not even by the Austrian admiral's blockade of their sea-ports, not even by Marshal Bugeaud's decisive victory at Isly, not even when (in 1860) their town of Tetuan surrendered to the Spanish troops. In fact, the Moors (as a people) possess a national arrogance and a geographical ignorance so perfect as to believe that their Lilliputian empire is as large as all Europe, and that they themselves are the finest nation in the world.

Opposed as Moors are to change, it is refreshing to contrast the condition of resident Europeans now with what it was half a century ago. According to writers of that period, they were liable to be ordered from town to town at the caprice of the Sultan,

while claims against them were decided in native courts by no means prejudiced in favour of Christian dogs. A good deal has happened since then. Mogador the Beautiful has been twice at the mercy of a Christian fleet. Treaties have been made, and if the Sultan himself had a complaint against the meanest Englishman in his dominions, it would be heard and judged by a gentleman above whose roof flutters the Union Jack.

Overlooking the battery from its rocky eminence soars the square tower of a dilapidated mosque, which, having been defiled by the presence of the infidels of France after the bombardment, is the only building of its kind in Marocco to which "Christian dogs" are allowed entrance. The architecture and interiors of mosques have been often described—magnificent structures, which, compared to the tiny Moorish church on the island, bear the relation of Westminster Abbey to a village "Ebenezer." The sole interest attached to the little mosque is a real live hermit, who, I am told, has passed within its precincts seventeen years of his life, in daily prayer

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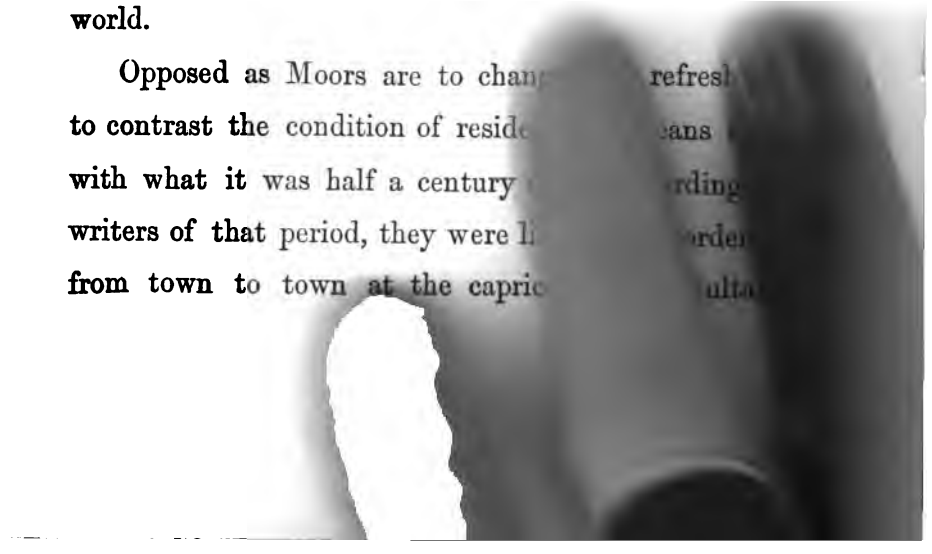

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and study of the Koran. Supported by the alms of his admirers on the mainland, Abd-es-Salam is qualifying for a saint by a life of seclusion, for which *post-mortem* canonisation seems to me an inadequate compensation. His position among the reprobate islanders strongly resembles the situation of Jonah in Nineveh. He acts as a moral tonic, and is called the *Thaleb* or scribe. Leaving Abd-es-Salam—"The Servant of Salvation"—to his beads, I pursue my ramble round the island, of which the soil seems to be composed exclusively of sand and white snail-shells, millions of them to the acre, and all empty. Hooker says that "the island is formed of an irregular, low, knobby mass of very friable tertiary rock." Knobby it undoubtedly is, and tertiary it may be. Anyhow, it sounds highly scientific and satisfactory. A picturesque desolation characterises the scenery. Out of thorn-bushes, sparkling pebbles, fantastic wave-worn cliffs and caves, Nature has wrought a stern, but curiously attractive landscape. In the foreground mark the foam flashing over sombre rocks, to mingle with the floods of sunshine falling from the

bluest of blue skies. But the island looks best when framed in storm-clouds, when the tremendous rollers of the Atlantic

> On the foremost rocks
> Touching, upjet in spirts of wild sea-smoke,
> And scale in sheets of wasteful foam, and fall
> In vast sea-cataracts.

No hot desert-wind, no frost nor snow, disturb the steady temperature of the climate. The noon-tide heat is fanned away by cool Atlantic breezes. The midnight skies are all aflame with stars that glitter with the brilliance of fire-flies, and by the light of the full moon the smallest print may easily be deciphered. The thermometer grows lazy for want of work, and quicksilver loses its natural agility, except during the fruitful autumnal rains, when it may descend from eighty-five degrees to fifty degrees Fahrenheit. Indigenous consumption is therefore almost unknown on the west coast of Marocco, and invalids who suffer from that disease will assuredly renew their leases of life by paying a visit to the town of Mogador during the winter months.

Throughout the whole island not one tree is to

be found, nor scarcely any shrub, save a hybrid brushwood resembling long-thorned gorse, covered with what seem exceedingly minute gherkins. After the rainy season, drifts of flowers* benevolently endeavour to mitigate the wild sterility; and a few misguided butterflies, waifs and strays from the mainland, botanise with all the energy of starvation. There is also a tribe of cats, marvellously lean and ill-favoured, which waste their nine wretched lives in futile bird's-nesting and foraging for fish.

If you wish for sport, you will find, like Robinson Crusoe, "a kind of wild pigeons, who build not as wood-pigeons, in a tree, but rather as house-pigeons, in the holes of the rocks." Early every morning large flights of these birds wing their way to the distant fields and gardens of the adjacent province of Haha, returning to roost shortly before sunset.

* I must apologise for having unconsciously trodden on flowers which, according to Hooker, are distinguished by such highly polysyllabic titles as *Andryala Mogadorensis*, *Astericus imbricatus*, and *Boucerosia Maroccana*. But the names seem several sizes too large for such little plants.

It was the Marshal de Mouchy, I believe, who discovered that pigeons were consolatory, and who, when plunged into affliction by the decease of a friend, was wont to say to his *chef*: "Roast pigeons to-day." They are, indeed, perfect poems, when served up with orange gravy, larded with bacon, and (a wrinkle) under the bacon a vine-leaf. The Moors and native Jews have a weakness for squabs (half-fledged pigeons), stewed in argan, or olive oil, which they consider "amatory food." In the nesting-season the Moors "yank" the infant pigeons out of their cradles in the rocks with a gaff.

Pottering about with a central-fire, you may now and then have the luck to knock over a shy curlew, or a white ibis, a brace of golden plover, perhaps, and possibly a teal, or velvet-duck, or scoter. There are also to be found on the shores of the bay at certain seasons, starlings, oyster-catchers, coots, terns, shearwaters, whimbrel, godwits, ruddy geese, snipe, sand-grouse, stilt-birds, two or three black ibis, red-shanks, green-shanks, turnstones, grebes, egrets, herons, ospreys, black and white gannets, and many kinds of gulls.

Cormorants and shags offer a pretty mark for your rifle. There is also excellent flea-hunting—though the *moors* are strictly preserved—to be enjoyed gratis. Besides myriads of beetles—the local sanitary commissioners—which devote their lives to the removal and analysis of refuse, there is the tiny emerald lizard, half Paul Pry, half Bob Acres, which peers at the passer-by from beneath some stony lurking-place, only to disappear as rapidly as a jack-in-the-box. There are, also, a few goats, and half-a-score of black-faced sheep of the Merino breed, belonging to the Governor of Mogador. But the sheep suffer from a strange disease, which destroys them just when they get fat enough to be killed for eating. Coupling this phenomenon with the known partiality of the islanders for mutton, the Kaid of Mogador (though the fleeces of his defunct wethers are scrupulously forwarded to him) insists that he is fleeced, and hints at what Sam Weller calls "the Have-his-Carcase Act," as an antidote to the unusual mortality among his sheep. Vague rumours of buried treasures considerably

enhance the zest of my island explorations. Every crevice and fissure in the rocks is scrutinised with the eye of Ali Baba. The sparkle of a pebble seems the glitter of a doubloon.

There are pleasant little coves on the landward side of the island, where the paddler may moor his craft, and in safety from sharks enjoy the luxurious coolness of the waves. Tired and heated, he takes a header, emerging, fresh and reinvigorated, to scamper along the sand to dry himself. Seeing "the print of a man's naked foot on the shore" always reminds me of that greatest of ramblers—Robinson Crusoe. Do we not all remember the terror he felt at the sight?—a terror we all have sympathised with, when reading that most delightful of biographies. Recollect, moreover, it was off the coast of Marocco, a little more than two hundred years ago, that his ship was chased by a "rover of Sallee," and, after a desperate engagement, captured. Robinson became the slave of the pirate captain, with whom he "frequently went out a-fishing" (what a pity he did not describe *his* "canoe rambles

Neither in the channel [illegible]
y buoys; nor is there a [illegible]
ne fact that there is [illegible]
the coast south of [illegible]
ne faint idea of the [illegible]
vernment.† The [illegible]
ver have been [illegible]
would it be [illegible]
utions. [illegible]
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in a Moorish bay"), and in whose boat he made his escape, "steering south and by east," close to the coast, so that he must absolutely have sighted Mogador Island.

From the precipitous northern rim of the island an enormous mass of rock has been semi-detached by some convulsion of nature. In the circular space between the island and its peninsula, the waves seethe and froth as if in a cauldron. Rarely, indeed, is the bay sufficiently calm to allow a canoe to enter the natural archway which tunnels that fragment of the island. Were the rash paddler caught by the rising tide or the freshening breeze, within that miniature Maelström, little chance would he have of escape by climbing the steep cliffs which surround it. On the summit of the island, a hundred feet above, is perched the small one-storeyed signal-station, where a flag is hoisted to notify the approach of a sailing vessel or steamer.

But now the golden glories of the setting sun, the tattered brown sails of home-bound fishing craft, the flights of "blue-rocks" and sea-fowl winging their way

to their roosting-places in the island cliffs, warn me that I must bestir myself if I would reach Mogador before the town-gates be closed for the night against all belated ramblers.

So I hasten to bid adieu to his worship the governor, who commands his ragged retainers to carry down my canoe to the beach, accompanying me thither himself. The *Pearl* is speedily launched, and a wave of the paddle answers the "Salaamah" (good-bye) shouted after me, as I glide away home.

G. D. C.

IV.

NOTES ON AGADIR AND MESSAH.

During the past few months a political movement of great importance to the present dynasty, and of interest indirectly to foreign trade, has been concluded. For more than seventy years the large trans-Atlasian provinces of Soos, Ait Bou Amran, and Noon had been practically independent, and their most powerful chief, Cid Hosein (son of the Cid Hashem, who, in 1810, renounced the authority of Moulai Sleeman), having lately caused the Government grave alarm by his rumoured negotiations with foreigners for the establishment of a port, free of imperial duties, within his jurisdiction, action of some kind became imperative. Trifling with the revenue is the one sin a Moorish sultan never pardons.

Therefore, having raised in May last a force of 27,000 men of all arms, his majesty marched from his southern capital, Maraksh, and, after visiting the loyal towns Agadir and Terudant, encamped, on the 3rd of July, within a mile of the river Messah. Here, shortly before his coronation—so the story goes—Moulai el Hassan, then his father's viceroy, endured an affront at the hands of Cid Hosein not easily to be forgotten. Halting with a body of 500 men, he received from that chieftain the message: "If you come in peace you will return to your place; should you cross the river, upon your head be the consequence."

But ten years of frequent drought have weakened the combative spirit of the tribes, so the army now advanced as far as Agloo, a still populous town near the sea-shore, and about twenty miles south of Messah, without meeting aught save submission; Hosein meanwhile remaining in his inaccessible mountain fastnesses above Ilirgh, seven or eight leagues to the southward. Ample offerings (considering the reduced state of the clans) poured into the camp, accompanied by petitions, which represented that for

the natives of these districts (possessing a sea-board of at least 170 miles) to be compelled to send their gums and almonds by a long, difficult, and dangerous road to Mogador, and to bring their food in years of scarcity by the same expensive route, was a source of great misery, and concluded by praying his majesty to establish one or more ports, whereby the petitioners might hold direct intercourse with the outer world. So satisfactory a solution of the difficulty was accepted there and then, and shortly afterwards a royal proclamation, published in Mogador, announced the Sultan's intention of building a port at Assáka,* at the mouth of the river, described in most maps as Wad Noon. This news was followed by further official statements to the effect that the importation of foodstuffs only is now open to all comers at the ports of Agadir and Assáka for a period of six lunar months, from the 15th of September,

* Of the several sites which have been named as possible ports, viz., Agadir, Messah, Agloo, Ifni, and Assáka, little is known of the last three save by the contradictory reports of natives, each interested in lauding his own locality.

upon payment of the customary duty of ten per cent. *ad valorem.*

Compelled by the breakdown of his commissariat to secure additional supplies for the army, the Sultan invited an English firm to land a quantity of food-stuffs on the coast of Soos. The British steamer *Risca*, chartered in Mogador by the contractors, left that port on the evening of the 2nd of July, 1882, loaded with grain and carrying a few passengers, myself among the number, arriving early on the following morning before the steep eminence whose crest, 600 feet above the sea level, is hidden by the white battlements of the little town of Agadir, only three-quarters of a mile in circumference. Facing the bay and extending perhaps half a mile along the base of the hill, a succession of dilapidated, flat-roofed, one-storey habitations compose the village of Fonté, whose prevailing hue of dullish red betokens the liberal use of *tabya*. Near to the smart, lime-washed dome of a saint-house in the centre of the village rise a couple of palms, the only trees within sight, vegetation

being seemingly limited to fields of the prickly pear plant and the uncultivated growth of argan and cactus bushes.

A glance at any map of Southern Marocco will show that Agadir Bay is protected by the high lands above Cape Ghir from the north-easterly winds, which sweep the rest of the coast from Cantin to Juby during eight months of the year. Although exposed to the westerly gales of the rainy season, this anchorage in four and a half fathoms possesses an advantage over that of the Mogador in the fact that escape to sea is easy, whereas the difficulty of leaving the latter port, when there is anything of a westerly swell, has gained for it, among skippers of the regular line of English steamers, an expressive name—the Rat-trap! Communication with the shore, a quarter of a mile from our anchorage, was effected by lighters of the Mogador pattern, of which primitive craft, each capable of transporting 80 to 100 sacks of grain, some half-score were lately built here for this service. The presence of low rocks near the place appointed

for beaching the lighters suggests the means of erecting an inexpensive landing-stage, in the absence of which much time is necessarily lost in despatching the boats, while nothing but special care will prevent a small proportion of the cargo (underwriters, beware!) from coming in "actual contact with sea water."

With true fatalistic indifference to such "acts of God," the venerable *Amin* commissioned by his majesty to rule the port of Agadir reclines on a heap of empty sacks under the shade of a tiny reed hut; repairing, when wearied with official state, to the roof of a neighbouring cistern, there to enjoy *otium cum dignitate* in the shape of green tea and biscuits. The Amin, without actually inviting us to visit the town, gave us to understand that no objection would be made to our entering it. To scale the steep sides of Agadir hill, however, animals of some kind were indispensable, and a request addressed by one of us to the acting governor having elicited the reply, "Learn that our beasts have been taken by the Kaid, who is

with the army," we resorted to the vulgar argument of hard dollars, and obtained from the village of Fonté the required number of pack mules, saddles being a luxury beyond purchase. That procession, straining up the rocky winding path under a midday sun, was possibly picturesque; it was certainly calculated, from the bold eccentricity of costume adopted by the Briton abroad, to astonish the natives, who, startled out of their habitual repose, awaited us in a small crowd outside the massive archway which, with its studded gates and cool alcove, forms the sole entrance to the town.

Once inside, the narrow streets, abounding in blank, whitewashed walls, seemed almost deserted, save where in miniature smithies, about the size of an ordinary bathing machine, grimy Vulcans were shaping the square horse-shoe with which the Moorish trooper disfigures his barb's hoof, and where, in the Jews' quarter, adjoining the residences of governor and tax-gatherers, every doorway had its group of women—most of them old, all of them ugly—

who showered blessings upon the Christians bringing employment for their men folk. As a fortress, except that it is commanded by a hill of equal height to the south-east, and that water has to be carried up by an acclivitous path from Fonté, Agadir might be made a place of considerable strength, commanding every approach by sea, and efficiently protecting any town built on the side of Fonté. As a commercial centre, its limited area and difficulty of access would seem to render it almost valueless, a remark which does not apply to the undulating plain below.

The history of Agadir, so far as I know it, may be summed up in very few words. Local tradition assigns to the town an age of from four hundred to five hundred years. About the end of the fifteenth century it fell, together with other portions of the coast, into the hands of Portuguese adventurers, by whom it was transferred (probably in the year 1503), by the name of Santa Cruz, to Don Manuel, King of Portugal, who caused the town to be enlarged and fortified. It then formed an admirable

base of military operations against the disunited tribes of the interior, and in course of the frequent and daring incursions the Portuguese not only obtained large numbers of slaves for the markets of his most Christian majesty, but were actually paving the way for a general occupation of Southern Marocco, when, in 1536, the progenitors of the present Shereefian dynasty, fired with the ambition of expelling the infidels, mustered an army of 50,000 men, which, under the command of Moulai Hamed el Hassan, speedily invested the fortress. An accident decided the result of the siege. A lighted match, incautiously carried by one of the garrison, fell into the powder magazine; its explosion making a breach in the wall, through which the victorious crescent was carried into the town.

From that time the port appears to have remained open to foreign trade until, in 1773, a rebellion having broken out in the town, the displeasure and perhaps the fear of the then Sultan, Cidi Mohammed, were marked by his compelling all resident merchants to remove to Mogador, which dates its modern commercial

existence from that period. In 1792, at the instance of the Netherlands Government, the port was suddenly re-opened, and in 1797 as suddenly closed; since which date the Gate of the Soudan (as it was wont to be called) has been so jealously guarded from foreign intrusion that barely half-a-dozen Europeans, by persistent and perilous endeavour, have succeeded in visiting a spot which the present necessity of the Sultan has rendered for the time being accessible to all comers. The *Risca* had not lain at anchor thirty-six hours before despatches from the Court reached her charterers, announcing the arrival of the army within a day's march of the River Messah, twenty miles to the southward, and expressing his majesty's wish that the steamer should at once proceed to discharge her grain in that hitherto unexplored locality.

A run of three hours from Agadir, on the 4th of July, brought the screw-steamer *Risca* abreast of the River Messah, a mile or so beyond which the French steamer *Amélie* (chartered by the Moorish Government to carry grain, etc., for

the army) and the *Tornado* corvette were already at anchor, led apparently to that berth by the mark of a white saint-house, the only stone building visible along all the sweep of low, dun-coloured hills that here border the coast. Hardly had the *Risca* let go her anchor than one of the three lighters she had towed from Agadir was brought alongside, and a picked crew of native watermen put in her, followed by the first mate, one of the charterers, our English Mogador pilot, and the writer. The light westerly breeze sped us towards the mouth of the river, over whose bar, in spite of the calmness of the sea, surf was breaking, though less violently it seemed than on the rock-bound shore to the southward. A brief consultation resulted in the command: "*Ya 'lah koolshi!*"—pull all—and four or five minutes of hard rowing, accompanied by frantic gesticulations and not a little strong language on the part of the burly *raïs*, or steersman, saw our barge gliding over the still water within the bar—the first craft, probably, that has ever landed Europeans at Wad Messah. A suave official, sent down to report the

arrival of the steamers, met us on the beach with the information that the Sultan had encamped, with a large portion of his army, near the northern bank of the river, about ten miles from where we stood. "Had we not better go up to the camp to arrange about landing our grain?" He didn't know: had no orders to that effect. "Could he give us animals to ride there?" He had none but his own. "Would he give us a guide?" "Oh yes." The man disappeared over a sand-hill in search of his gun, and did not return. A brilliant idea flashed from the mate. "Why not go up in the lighter?" No time was lost in getting her afloat again, and, to their sonorous rhythmic invocation of the locality's patron saint, Cidi Ouasan, our swarthy crew swept the craft over the rising tide. Aided by the current and the breeze, to catch which a sail was extemporised from a haïk spread between two oars, we in time emerged from among the desolate dunes which command the entrance to the river, into a stream averaging perhaps fifty yards from bank to bank, with a depth at high water and in the proper channel, of something over a fathom.

The first sign of human life was a tiny hamlet on our left, composed of low-roofed reddish houses, with a few hedges of prickly-pears, some fig trees, and a small herd of kine. To the right the dwellings of a once populous settlement, still partially inhabited, covered one side of a bold headland, on rounding which we saw the peaks of the Anti-Atlas range, towering 6000 to 7000 feet above the plains of Soos, of which province they are a southern boundary. As we advance, the valley of the river assumes a softer aspect. Here and there fields of ripening maize and the branches of cypress-like trees, overhanging the low bank, almost hide from view the stone-built habitations of Berber villages, among which the snow-white sanctuary with its cluster of date-palms is always the most conspicuous feature. Presently the report that an extraordinary boat, steered by a being in the uncouth costume of *Room* (*i.e.* Rome, Europe), was ascending their inviolate river, brought to the water's edge crowds of natives who, from curiosity, or, as our crew said, from looting propensities, tramped abreast of our craft the rest of the journey.

Their invitation to us to go ashore was regarded by our native *raïs* as proof of diabolical treachery, and at his suggestion—perhaps as a challenge—our crew changed the chorus they were singing to one in honour of the reigning Sultan.

One cannot fail to be struck by the volume of water in this stream, which, within an hour or two of high tide, would fully allow of the passage of loaded lighters drawing, say, three feet; this, too, where locks are as yet undreamt of, and after a drought of at least fifteen months. The number and extent of now more or less deserted villages testify to the former prosperity of this region. That fish exist in sufficient quantities to render them worth attention is proved by a double row of submerged hedges drawn at one place from bank to bank. Once the "golden sands" near to the sea are traversed, the composition of the bed shows a proportion of clay, which may be expected to increase higher up, promising a more reliable channel than is possessed by many of "Afric's sunny fountains." Presently we came in sight of a forest of dingy canvas spreading over more than a mile of

undulating ground north of the stream. Deciding not to risk the delay of awaiting formal permission to approach the camp, we ran the lighter ashore, and, unarmed and unmolested, made for the Government encampment, where, half-an-hour later, we received a hearty welcome from the leaders of an almost famished army.

The story of wearisome marches, attended by hunger and thirst, is written in the worn appearance of the men, whose endurance is simply marvellous. As for the horses and baggage mules, their "points" are too prominent to escape attention. "How much barley have you brought?" was the first question of the Grand Vizier, a remarkably portly personage with a short black beard, as he reclined on cushions under a large round tent, the sides of which were removed for coolness. He shortly afterwards went to report to his majesty, who sat alone under a smaller half-opened tent about fifty yards away. Commencing his story on one knee, he rose at a gesture from the Sultan, and during the rest of the interview, which lasted about ten minutes, remained standing. Then, with

another profound genuflexion, he retired backwards from the Shereefian presence.

During the *Risca's* four days' stay at Messah, the landing of grain was proceeded with under difficulties, the surf on a wholly unprotected beach causing serious damage to lighters, while one of the crew of a dingey, upset in the breakers, unfortunately lost his life before help could be brought. The poor fellow's body was washed ashore near the little saint-house before mentioned, whither on the morrow the Sultan, preceded by a large body of horsemen, repaired to offer up his Friday devotions. Never, surely, has that desolate coast seen so bright a picture as was made by the four vessels at anchor (including the *Tornado* corvette, and a schooner belonging to the *Risca's* charterers) with every stitch of bunting run up fore and aft. Loud thundered the *Tornado's* salute guns, as the Emperor, riding a dark brown barb, appeared on the brow of the low hill, whose western slope was alive with moving masses of red-fezzed, cream-cloaked cavalry. Prayers over, his majesty sat for more than half-an-hour outside the sanctuary, sur-

veying the ships through a pair of field-glasses; then, remounting, passed slowly among the troops, whose "turban'd cohorts throng the beach," to where the *Risca's* cargo was being landed, and rapidly packed on trains of camels for the camp. Apparently recognising one of that steamer's charterers, the Emperor signed him to approach. "Are you of the company Shut al Wort?" (Royal pronunciation of a name better known, doubtless, in Mincing Lane, must not be tampered with.) "Alláh be gracious to you; go on helping us; give our greeting to your firm." So saying, the Sultan put his horse in motion, and, to borrow a phrase from Bunyan, "we saw him no more." By the following morning the army had moved southward towards Agloo, the *Tornado* had left for Cadiz, and the *Risca*, with the schooner *Jessie Shuttleworth* and her three lighters in tow, was steaming for Agadir, leaving Messah to its normal aspect of sleepy desolation.

R. L. N. J.

V.

A MARCH BY MOONLIGHT WITH THE ARMY.

"ARISE, my lord! The Vizier awaits you." The summons came from a muscular negro, who, in his white overshirt, embroidered leather belt, hooded cloak of half-bleached wool, and the long, scarlet fez of the *gendarmerie*, entered the comfortable tent at Boriki,* where, after a six hours' ride from Mogador, I was enjoying a snooze on the afternoon of the 4th August last, corresponding with the third week of Ramadan. Mounting a tawny barb, he led the way at a canter through a forest of travel-stained bell-tents (the camp of the regular infantry),

* In the province of Haha.

never heeding the complaints of the red-tunicked and red knickerbockered fellows whose *al fresco* stews he more than once upset. Passing the market, in which crowds of country folk were noisily exchanging their sheep, goats, butter, flour, and the like for current coin of the empire, we clattered up the side of a stony hill whose brow was covered by the Court encampment, consisting of some four or five hundred tents of all shapes and dimensions, from the low camel-hair *gitoon* of a wandering Arab to the double or treble-poled *coobba* of colonels and secretaries of state. In the centre was a large canvas enclosure, eight feet high, inside which, their entrances entirely screened by it from curious eyes, a couple of umbrella-tents and several smaller ones accommodated his majesty and such of the imperial household as are chosen to accompany the army.

Immediately outside the enclosure stood a small marquee, whose blue and red striped curtains distinguish it as the *seewan*, or audience tent of

the Sultan, which, like two others in a line with it—the "mosque" and the *'mshwor* or council tent—was empty. As we approached, a sonorous voice was proclaiming the call to prayer:

> Alláh is great! Alláh is great!
> Testify, no god save God,
> And our lord Mohammed the Prophet of God.
> Come to prayer, come to your soul's good.

Presently from within the royal pavilion came a thin shrill cry* of "Alláh bless our master's life," echoed by the bass voices of the famous negro guard without, and Moulai el Hassan, his commanding form draped in a white bernouse, appeared. Advancing to the mosque, he was joined by some half-score of fellow-worshippers, who, in a row, with his majesty in the centre, performed with triple prostration the "proper lessons for the day." Five times a day, my companion informs me, the Sultan, as becomes a descendant of the Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful, goes through

* Of the imperial eunuchs.

this pious exercise—when the morning star appears, at noon, in the middle of the afternoon, at sunset, and again a few hours later. With his express sanction the thirty days' fast of Ramadan has been neglected by the whole army during this expedition; he alone in court and camp refusing to taste food and drink while the sun is above the horizon.

Prayers over, the Sultan retired to the seewan, in which he remained, seated on a chair of European make, until sunset; the others taking their places in the 'mshwor, where, a few minutes after our arrival, I made my bow to a portly personage of middle height, and of perhaps forty years of age, in whose regular features, hazel eyes, olive complexion, and short black beard, I recognised, as he sat cross-legged on a prayer-carpet in the centre of a double row of ministers and secretaries, his highness Cid Mohammed Bel Aarby, Grand Vizier and principal secretary to the Shereefian Court ("elevated by God"), and uncle by marriage to the present Emperor. Before him was a small

desk of deal, similar to those of his colleagues, and furnished like theirs with a tiny inkstand and a few pens cut from the common reed. On it, too, stood a glass of water, from which—although it *was* Ramadan—he occasionally moistened his lips. Signing to me to be seated on a carpet near him, he at once entered upon the object of my visit, which had been stated to him in a previously delivered letter. During a conversation of nearly three-quarters of an hour, his countenance, possessing a certain refinement and certainly very little, if any, of the sensual character of many of his companions' faces, rarely lost its habitual look of *ennui* and a kind of polished superciliousness, not ill-fitting the prime minister of a more than half Oriental sovereign.

Noting on a slip of paper the proposals of which I was the bearer, he rose, and as he gathered his cream-coloured shawl about him, said: "I shall consult our Sovereign about this. To-night we march to Koureimat (twenty miles distant), and you will accompany us thither. Meanwhile, you are our guest,

and as far as Maraksh if you will. You will fare none the worse for being your own interpreter. May Alláh send you contented."

The Sultan rarely travels without an army of at least twenty thousand men. Except when passing six months or a year in Fez or Maraksh, he is almost always on the road between the two capitals of his empire. He seldom visits the ports, and has never been on the sea. When at Agloo, during the recent expedition in Soos, he was one day scanning the horizon with a powerful binocular, in a vain search for the French steamer chartered to bring provisions for the troops, and remarked to the British officer, who has been for six years drilling the regulars: "I thought you Christians ruled the sea." "Only the English, your majesty," was the prompt reply.

His majesty's military proclivities have led to the formation in the army of a nucleus of seven or eight thousand trained soldiers, some of whom are capable of doing very considerable execution, up to five hundred yards, with rifles of Belgian make. This

force, composed of regiments each of which has a nominal strength of one thousand men, performs battalion drill, etc., in a manner declared by Captain Colville, in his book on Marocco, to be highly creditable to the English Drill Instructor General, and to the non-commissioned native officers trained at Gibraltar.

The troops are officered very much as in the English army. A trifling advantage enjoyed by commissioned officers in the latter service, has, however, not been extended to Marocco, where giving "stick" to a full colonel is by no means unknown in the unwritten articles of war. Captains of companies receive* about eighteenpence a day; privates twopence halfpenny, in cash or in kind. No wonder that, on such pay, the prospect of "eating up" an unruly tribe should immediately bring the battalions up to their full strength. The artillery, consisting of a few field-pieces and mitrailleuses, and some score of mountain-guns, employs about five hundred men, under the direction of two French officers, and

* Occasionally.

however insignificant from an European point of view, has generally been found sufficient to overawe the disaffected clans with whom the army has come in contact.

Not seldom, on arriving within a district where supplies have been withheld and other symptoms of sulkiness exist, his majesty has ordered shells to be discharged, at midnight, in all directions; thereby considerably astonishing and occasionally inconveniencing the natives. Over and above the regular infantry and the artillery, the Sultan is accompanied by a large force of loyal tribesmen—well-to-do peasants and "gentlemen farmers"—each *kabyla*, or clan, being commanded by its own Basha, who takes the rank of Colonel, *Kaid Erraha*. When summoned to attend an expedition, it is the duty of this functionary—who, usually chosen by Government from some influential local family, is something of a lord lieutenant, county court judge, police magistrate, and military officer rolled into one—to raise, by fair means or foul, as many men and horses as he can. If his district, in some cases as large as an average English county, be ordinarily prosperous,

he should be able to place five hundred cavalry in the field at a few weeks' notice. He impresses all the camels he requires to carry a certain quantity of food to the camp, and trusts, in case of being ordered to remain with the army, that the subsequent wants of his little regiment may be supplied from the legitimate "spoils of war," *i.e.*, the homesteads and matamoras of rebel clans.

With a holy horror of innovation, the tribal cavalier preserves intact the traditions of Bedouin warfare. No new-fangled breech-loader, or jacket of Frankish pattern for him! His often voluminous under-clothing draped in a coarse bernouse, the hood of which is drawn over his fezzed or turbaned head, he places his yellow-slippered foot into a high shovel stirrup, grasps his long, silver-banded flint-lock gun (warranted to miss at fifty yards), and, springing with cat-like agility on to the bulky, red-clothed saddle of his own, or possibly his neighbour's, sure-footed barb, will laugh at a forty mile march, and is ready to go anywhere and do anything. When on the road, a dry loaf and casual refreshment

at wayside wells, with an occasional pipe of *keef*, are all sufficient for his needs, the saddle-bag behind him carrying a day's forage for his horse. Though should occasion offer, he will no more spare his host than he does himself or his charger. Since the spring of 1860, when the Spaniards were advancing on Tetuan, he has never even seen an European force, and doubtless believes that with the Prophet's help he is a match for "the nations" in arms.

The Commander-in-Chief, strange to say, is a civilian, and a *fakeeh*—a kind of clergyman. He is also a brother of the Grand Vizier. He wisely prefers an ambling mule to a mettlesome horse, and shines in book-keeping considerably more than in strategy.

The reader will kindly imagine that night has now wrapped our encampment in her star-gemmed mantle. A thousand camp-fires twinkle from hill and dale. The cool breeze sweeps voluptuously over the tanned brows of Moslim warriors, and rustles now and again among the leaves of a clump of palm-trees overhanging the tiny tarn hard by. From the

groups of soldiery, squatting before their tent doors and drinking the inevitable green tea, come low murmurs of solemn talk, unbroken save by the occasional thrumming of a gimbry, and, from distant hill-side, over which the waning moon has just risen, the long-drawn howl of a jackal. Presently a loud boom gives the signal to strike camp, and all is changed to bustle and noise. With wonderful rapidity the tents and lighter baggage are packed on mules and despatched. Camels, roaring at the untimely interruption to their supper off straw and sand—accidental admixture of the soil seems in no way to disturb their complacency—are being loaded with such impedimenta as trunks and gun-carriages, and I, mounting my little gray, quickly drift into one of the many streams of humanity pressing towards Koureimat. The whole landscape seems, under the silvern gleam of the wan moon, to be moving eastwards, except where, outside the Sultan's pavilion, the dusky cohorts of the imperial guard, interspersed with innumerable standard-bearers, are drawn up, both they and their horses still as statues.

This still formidable regiment is all that remains of the Negro Guard, so famous up to the eighteenth century in the annals of Marocco, which, originally enrolled by Moulai Ismail, in the Soudan, at one time numbered upwards of 15,000 men, and was wont to levy from successive Emperors a heavy tax in return for its support. Near to the royal tent a brass band, originally instructed, I believe, by a Spanish renegade, was playing in very tolerable style, "Partant pour la Syrie."

"Welcome! Welcome to the army," exclaimed in tones of cordial astonishment a voice at my side, and I recognised in a gaunt figure jogging along on a spirited little donkey, an officer in the *Harába*, or department of drill-masters, who, in virtue of their superior attainments, are told off to instruct recruits in the mysteries of goose-step and so forth. My friend, whose identity I shall veil (until freedom of speech becomes a virtue in Barbary) under the title and name of Kaid Hamed, having thrown back his hood for the greater ease of conversation, poured in a volley of inquiries about my health and general well-being. Evading my—I hope delicately expressed

—congratulations upon his acquisition of a charger, he went on to say:

"Thank God, this expedition is over! Since you were with us in Messah, the Faithful have been dying more than a score a day. Rice was once at tenpence a pound, and only a drop of water sometimes for days. And the sun! The Sultan would not let us fight, or we might have helped ourselves."

"Had you no fighting then at all?"

"Only a trifle. We knocked down a few houses with cannon after the tribe had run away. I'll not lie to you. The Soos people are too weak this year from famine to resist, and they brought into camp all they had of what Cidna (our sovereign) wants. But now the very girls go about begging. How many came *unveiled* into camp! No power but from Alláh, for the daughters of Soos have more than the beauty of gazelles!" His enthusiasm carried him, like Mr. Wegg, into poetry, and he began to hum a song, of which I will only inflict upon the reader two lines:

> They know not the bath, nor their faces to veil,
> Yet before their cheeks' roses flower-gardens are pale.

I gather from a whispered remark of the worthy Kaid's that more than one Moslim Paris had added a Berber Helen to his harem.

No kind of order was observed on the journey. The narrow tracks, which it would be gross flattery to call a road, and the fields on either side were traversed by a throng of riders on horse and mule, of sumpter mules, camels, and even the countryman's humble moke with its load of straw and other farm produce. Everyone seemed bent on arriving first at the new encampment, and but for our pace, which was merely a quick walk, our progress resembled a stampede rather than a march. (It was not thus when, two months ago, I accompanied these same troops through this district on their way to Soos.) "No baggage to take the road until the Sultan has passed," cried a dashing guardsman as a stupid negro muleteer shoved his less stupid beast among a long train of cavalry entering the defile of Timsourin. The black was deaf to the admonition, and on its repetition only muttered sullenly, "I am the slave of the Basha So-and-So." "Alláh burn your father

and his!" exclaimed the other, and, spurring his barb forward at a bound, he gave the unfortunate nigger a drive in the back with the butt of his gun which nearly sent him over the mule's ears.

Every now and then a lantern carried before a batch of quick-pacing mules announced the riders to be persons of importance, real or imaginary.

"Look," observed my comrade, as a white-shrouded form, preceded by an extra-sized lantern, appeared on our right; "there goes El Zibdy, he who insulted the Spanish Minister at Tangier, and brought on our last war."

By-and-by, after more than six hours' jolting, we saw dawn begin to break and the candles go out. Being then in the immediate neighbourhood of Koureimat we halted, as a few others were doing, and, stretching ourselves on the ground (for no tent may be raised before the Sultan's), ignominiously slumbered for perhaps an hour—more fortunate than an officer in the artillery, who woke to find that his horse had been relieved of a costly saddle. We were aroused by the arrival of the escort allotted to me, and found

the royal encampment already being pitched half-a-mile farther on, where soon afterwards, thanks to the hospitable care of Kaid Maclean, the English officer previously alluded to, I forgot, over an ambrosial breakfast of roast fowls, eggs, and coffee, the trifling fatigue of the night's ride.

Through the tent door we could see, among the first arrivals—*place aux dames*—some two score figures, closely muffled in haïks, and seated man-fashion on mules, the female contingent of his majesty's travelling household, whose ranks were kept in order and protected from undue curiosity by a handful of gigantic cavaliers in garments of immaculate whiteness, the "black old neutral personages" who to-day guard the Hesperian bowers from would-be Hercules.* Silence, absolute and impenetrable, must be my cue in all that touches the harem, lest a similar fate should befall me which awaited that unfortunate minstrel who, a *very* long

* For interesting details of life in the imperial harem, see Lemprière's "Tour to Marocco," chap. xii.

time ago, of course, was desired by an emperor to sing the praises of a favourite. The poet sang so well, and with such minute description, that, the imperial jealousy being aroused, both the songster and the dame took a cup of tea too much,* and died. Closely following the ladies, who entered an enclosure like, if not the same as, that of yesterday's camp, came an apparently endless train of mounted standard-bearers, whose flags of every colour, red, green, and gold predominating, cast long shadows athwart the royal pavilion, before which their supporters drew up in ranks four or five deep on either side. Preceded by half-a-dozen richly-caparisoned led steeds, and mounted on a black horse of finest Arab breed, Moulai El Hassan, who stands nearly a head above the rest of the army, advanced at a foot pace between the ranks of red-coated infantry and Bedouin cavalry, which to right and left line the path for nearly a mile. The imperial parasol of

* "To drink tea with the Sultan," I have often heard as synonymous for being poisoned.

crimson velvet, more imposing than useful at so early an hour, is held aloft by a stalwart horseman. At either stirrup runs a black slave whose office is to brush away, with a silken kerchief, any flies that may molest the grave Shereefian features, which brighten into something resembling a smile as the regulars present arms, and the tribesmen raise their hoarse salute: "Alláh bless our master's life." The band strikes up the spirited Spanish "Marcha Real," which has been adopted as the royal march of Marocco. The masters of tom-toms and native flageolets, not to be outdone, add their music of the past to the clash of cymbals and blare of cornets à piston, with a result almost Wagnerian. The cry of the Bedouins is taken up, as his majesty enters the enclosure, by the eunuchs within, and straightway every man in camp turns into his tent for a few hours' well earned repose.

R. L. N. J.

VI.

MOORISH GASTRONOMY.

As compilers of cookery-books have generally endeavoured to vindicate in their prefaces the paramount dignity of their topic, I deferentially follow such illustrious exemplars by boldly declaring that national gastronomy is no whimsical criterion of national civilisation; and that the ethnographer of the future —contrasting the beef-eater with the vegetarian— may discover from the chemistry of food that meals, not manners, makes the Mussulman. "It has been observed," says Dallas, in the "Book of the Table," "that, in the great schism of the Reformation, the people who held to the oil-jar and wine-butt remained faithful to the Pope; while those who drank good ale, and found in the keg of butter a sufficient feast of fatness, nearly all turned Protestant."

Possibly, therefore, the spread of Mohammedanism from Mecca to Marocco may be ascribed to the date-palm and camel's milk by those speculative philosophers who discern in edibles a complete system of ethics; who deem religion the accident of diet; and who, defining man as "a cooking animal," affirm with Elia—in his "Dissertation on Roast Pig"—that raw meat has ever meant rude manners, and that

> The art of cookery drew us gently forth
> From that ferocious life when, void of faith,
> The anthropophaginian ate his brother.

Not only are national intelligence and morality affected by the creature comforts, but the aphorism attributed to Napoleon—"Men are governed by their stomachs"—if it do not merely refer to ministerial whitebait or municipal turtle, also connects the cook with the historian. "To the end of time," says Arsène Gousset, in the "Member for Paris," "the man who has not dined will be the foe of the man who has; and the history of revolutions is but that of the alternate triumphs of the empty stomachs over the full ones."

Furthermore, if there be any truth in the "Physiologie du Goût," the gastronomy of paradise—whether situated in the Fortunate Isles or Bolotoo; whether illustrated by the nectar and ambrosia of Olympus, the metheglin and boar's flesh of Valhalla, or the moose-lip, beaver-tail, and buffalo-hump of the Happy Hunting Grounds—may serve to display not merely the high estimation in which human creed-makers themselves have held the pleasures of the palate, but also (more or less graphically in proportion to national barbarism or civilisation) the actual effects of their apotheosis of the stomach on their disciples of the present day.

Now the Moorish paradise is a glutton's dream. Its soil, of whitest wheaten flour, is irrigated by rivulets of milk and wine and honey. The musical branches of the immeasurable tûba tree, which adorns the celestial palace-garden of the Prophet of Islam, are laden with exquisite fruits, and ready-dressed banquets of thrice a hundred courses in golden dishes, such as the Slave of the Lamp served up to Aladdin. In short, the heaven of the Moor is

an elysium wrought out of a pastrycook's shop and a harem, where the existence of the blessed will be one eternal "guzzling-bee," somewhat similar to Sydney Smith's description of the future state of beatified epicures—"the eating of *pâtés de foie gras* to the sound of trumpets." No wonder, therefore, that—like the ogre in the play, who yearned for "some forty pounds of lovely beef swimming in a Mediterranean Sea of brewis;" or like the Zummerzetshire ploughboy, whose notion of supreme earthly bliss was "to zit on a zdile and eat no end o' pancake edges"—the Moor's *summum bonum* here and hereafter is repose and abundance.

The great Prophet was a great *chef* spoilt. Nevertheless he made good cheer serve a grand moral purpose, both in this world and the next. Recognising the importance of fixing immutably the dates of the appointed festivals of the faith, Mohammed invoked the aid of that infallible chronologist, Messire Gaster, who, on the authority of Rabelais, is "the greatest master of arts in the world." What Moor would ever forget Abraham's

sacrifice, or the transmission of the Koran from Heaven, or the anniversary of Mohammed's birth-day—events stamped on his memory by festivity and fast? To these and other Moorish carnivals must be added the numerous *fiestas* of the native Jews, "of whom it may be safely asserted that no people in Marocco more pamper their appetites. What with weddings and obligatory festivals, their existence is one round of eating and drinking."* Witness the Arabic proverb: "The Christians spend their estates in law-suits, the Jews in keeping their festivals, and the Moors in banqueting at their marriages." But the cookery of the native Jew will be only casually alluded to, because, while bearing a general resemblance to the Moorish cuisine, it presents mostly Mosaic peculiarities common to all Jewry, and therefore not pertinent to this monograph.

Leaving my reader to apply, if he will, the famous maxim of Brillat Savarin, "Dis-moi ce que

* Richardson's "Travels in Marocco."

tu manges, et je te dirai qui tu es," to the gastronomy of the Moors, I beg him at the same time to bear in mind that in Marocco, as elsewhere, one man's meat is another man's poison; also that a well-known north-country dish may, in the southern provinces, be "caviare to the general," and *vice versâ*; chiefly because kitchen lore is oral, not written. Though the paradox of a nation without cookery-books may puzzle the Infidel epicure, I know of no Moorish Grimod de la Reynière or Beauvilliers; and even if there were any chroniclers of the native cuisine, their "Almanachs des Gourmands" would not be understanded of the people, few of whom can read their own language. It is therefore impossible to trace the origin of culinary traditions, some perhaps coeval with the Pyramids (if not the Tower of Babel), which have no other archives than old wives' memories.

The reader must also remember that, though ancient writers were wont to distinguish the heterogeneous races of Barbary by their staple food, as lotos-eaters, locust-eaters, milk-drinkers, fish-eaters, such distinctions were in reality topographical, not

necessarily tribal; because the dietary of citizen, husbandman, and herdsman, Moor, Arab, Berber, Negro, and Jew, differs widely in various parts of the Sultanate, according to local and social conditions.

Modern travellers in Marocco, so far as my acquaintance with their works extends, have only cursorily noticed the cuisine of the country; because, in the absence of native cookery-books, it is almost impossible for a "Christian dog" to familiarise himself with the domestic gastronomy of a Moorish household—*être à pot et à rôt*—so ineradicable are the true believers' prejudices against the accursed Nazarene.

"Hospitable as an Arab," runs the native proverb. But the European *stranger** will meet with anything but hospitality in the more fanatical districts of Marocco. The traveller in the interior who has sufficient influence to obtain a firman, or passport, from the Sultan or some powerful basha will, on his arrival at a *dooar*, be provided with enormous quantities of food requisitioned by his escort from

* The European *resident*, knowing something of the language and customs of the country, will, of course, fare better.

the hapless villagers.* He will be feasted right royally, and cursed behind his back with a virulence proportioned to the scale of his entertainment, maugre the presents which are generally made to the headman of the community. But the ordinary tourist must generally pay through the nose.

Another reason for the traveller's reticence about Moorish *gourmandise* is to be found in the native inns, of which there are two kinds. The inferior hostelry accommodates man and beast; the better only man—and vermin. Mine host of the Saracen's Head supplies merely an unfurnished cell with white-washed walls, generally windowless, and a tiled or clay floor; leaving his lodger to provide himself with the rug, matting, cooking utensils, and other scanty chattels which suffice for Moorish comfort. The wayfarer either prepares his meals himself (for there is no attendance—the charge for the den rarely

* "At night, the inhabitants of Harach, besides barley for the beasts, brought upon their heads 475 dishes of couscasoo, 40 dishes of honey, and great plenty of bread."—"Braithwaite's Journal," p. 133.

exceeding a shilling a week), or, more frequently, purchases his victuals ready-dressed at the adjacent cookshop. Therefore it is not in the caravanserais, but in the markets and restaurants (if I may so degrade a noble word), of Marocco, that the peculiarities of indigenous gastronomy must be studied, not with the haste of the passing tourist, but with the deliberation of the resident alien.

That the shortest cut to the average soul lies through the gastric regions is an opinion by no means monopolised by Mohammed; for it is with hyperbolical eulogies of the ecstasy of a "blow-out" that the strolling story-teller tickles the imaginations of auditors, who, with watering mouths, seem to devour his description of such luxuries of "The Arabian Nights' Entertainment" as the pearl-stuffed cucumbers of Princess Perizadeh, the almond patties of Bagdad, and those delicious cream tarts of Bedreddin Hassan, strewn with pomegranate-kernels and sugar.

Anon the swarthy yarn-spinner, varying his theme from gay to grave, thrills his audience with eerie legends of the poisoned cates and deadly

potions of jealous lovers and impatient heirs-prospective; or tells of the moonlight bivouacs of body-snatching ghouls amid the tombs, and of the Ugolino supper of midnight vampire doomed for his sins to drain the heart's blood of those whom he in life held dearest. And a shuddering horror falls upon the silent listeners, who one and all have heard the fearful rumour that in the late famine "strange flesh" was eaten by desperate men.

That was the period when fowls of the air, *videlicet*, poultry and game, soared into pecuniary altitudes hitherto explored only by West-end poulterers; when legs of mutton galloped away with whole dollars, and when suet became only a fond dream of "auld lang syne." (If I jest, 'tis but the natural revulsion of feeling in one who has himself passed with fear and trembling through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where month after month the feeble wails of little ones for a morsel of garbage, the moans of the dying, and the cry of mourners smote ever on the ear, until at last—at last—when the windows of heaven were opened, and Alláh's blessed

rain drenched the parched earth, dark Azrael sheathed the sword of destruction.

The frequency of local famines may partly account for the proneness of writers on Marocco to describe the inhabitants as Spartans in their diet. But native frugality arises from necessity, not choice, at least among the poor, who eat to live only because they cannot live to eat. Few are the country-folk who can afford meat daily compared to the numbers who, only tasting it in festival times, subsist chiefly on barley, maize, roots, berries, vegetables,* fruit, milk —especially buttermilk—eggs, with now and then some river-fish, honey, butter, cheese, or game. It would, perhaps, be arbitrary on the other hand to define the Moors as a nation of gluttons. It is only the Moor of the towns whom Xavier Durrieu charges with "the vice of boundless gluttony." But for a poor townsman or countryman to refrain of his own

* But it should be noted that, with the exception of the pumpkin and cucumber, hardly any vegetables are cultivated in the interior of Marocco, unless in the vicinity of towns, or in the gardens of provincial governors and wealthy sheikhs.

accord from repletion when the opportunity offers itself, would bespeak a moral sense not cultivated even by the most opulent natives, who are, alas! generally the fattest in this land where cash and corpulence seem synonymous.

The prevalent leanness of limb which characterises the Moorish race collectively has peradventure led them to consider that loveliness and *embonpoint* are identical. Feminine beauty in Marocco, far from being merely skin deep, is measured by the camel-load; and, fat being more esteemed than features, the homeliest damsel of twenty stone is more admired than one hundredweight of what would seem, to the eye of Europe, perfect prettiness. As wives therefore are valued like whales—for their blubber—the Moorish belle seeks from diet the charm denied to her by Nature. Taking as her model the Hottentot Venus, Fatima undergoes—especially during betrothal—a process of cramming very similar to the mode of fattening Strasburg geese. After every meal she moulds with her fingers the crumb of new bread —sometimes mixed with fenugreek—into pellets of the

shape and size of No. 12 central-fire cartridges. This ammunition is rammed down her gullet with the aid of green tea or other beverages; and by stuffing down from fifty to one hundred of these boluses daily for about a month, the fair martyr to Moorish materialism acquires a breadth of body and a mammoth-like massiveness of limbs, which render locomotion a vanity, and getting upstairs a vexation of spirit. With irrepressible mirth I have watched a Jewish matron (five feet by four feet) making the ascent to the upper storey of her house, propelled *a tergo* by three perspiring Israelites. Beneath her elephantine tread earth trembled, ceilings creaked, and chairs not expressly manufactured to sustain her "too, too solid flesh" shrivelled suddenly, as if smitten by a thunderbolt, into infinitesimal chips!

In contradistinction to fat, the small native bullock is a sight to make a British grazier weep. Ill-bred and ill-fed, beef is generally (save in very fertile districts, after the rainy season) stringy and tough. Owing to the climate, no kind of meat will bear keeping—on the coast, at least—for

more than two or three days, even in winter. (The thermometer very rarely falls below 50° Fahrenheit.) Neither can beef be salted, perhaps because of the inferior quality of the native salt, which is either procured from the "salt licks" in the interior, or gathered from the rocks on the coast. But in some localities, during the summer months, beef is cut into slips about two inches thick, and dried, like *charqui*, in the sun; then fried in butter or oil, and potted like pemmican. Jackson* says, "I have seen some thirty years old." Tolerable mutton is occasionally obtainable, albeit native sheep—sometimes four-horned—are rather of the greyhound-build, and furnish mutton of a woolly, goaty taste. But the aromatic herb-fed mountain sheep of the province of Soos is accredited with a flavour superior to Southdown. On special occasions of rejoicing a whole sheep is baked in its skin upon wood-embers, and enthusiastic tourists—not Cook's—insist that no Welsh mutton that was ever roasted can compare

* "Travels through West and South Barbary," p. 349.

with a Soos sheep *à l'Arabe*, so tender and juicy is the meat; while the skin, from which all the wool has been singed off by the fire, becomes rapturous "crackling," meet for the mouth of Charles Lamb himself. A British ambassador to the Court of Marocco was considerably astonished at seeing "a sheep, roasted whole upon a great wooden spit as thick as a man's leg, set upon the table, spit and all."*

Goats' flesh is also extensively consumed, and "the country Moors"—says Chenier—"eat camels flesh with a good appetite; but the taste of this meat is insipid, and the broth has a white tincture unpleasing to the eye." My own experiments on elderly camels' flesh lead me to prefer gutta-percha as an edible, "by a large majority."

"Lamb and veal," says Jackson,† "are unlawful meats, it being an injunction of the Mohammedan law that no domestic animal shall be eaten till full-grown." But an injunction, I may add, which

* Stewart's "Journey to Mequinez," p. 7.

† "Account of the Empire of Marocco," p. 68.

cannot be found in the Koran, and one which (so far as concerns lamb) is certainly more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Moorish fowls, capons excepted, are generally as scraggy as they are cheap; which is saying a good deal. The natives are very partial to squabs, infant pigeons, which, when artistically spatchcocked, make a capital *entrée*. Ducks and geese are very rare birds, except in one coast-town, called Mazagan. The facts that turkeys are common only in Maraksh, and that rabbits are unknown south of Rabat, I leave zoologists to explain.

The inhabitants of the sea-ports are large consumers of fish, of which first in the scale of merit ranks the *shebbel*—christened the Barbary salmon—a species of shad, which in flavour is incomparably superior, *crede experto*, to the vaunted shad of the Schuylkill. Next come sardines, which, when fresh from the sea, fried in olive-oil, with a dash of lemon, may vie with Greenwich whitebait, or the boccarone of Malaga. Red mullet—"the woodcock of submarine plantations"—(though outraged by native cooks, who,

miserable heathens! reject its sublime liver, and never dream of envelope of oiled paper) and the delicate silvery "Father of Abraham"—in size a herring, in savour a poem—claim honourable mention. Huge thunnies, ponderous rock-cod, light-pink "snappers" scaling up to a dozen pounds, weightier and rosier "stump-noses," sapphirine gurnards, bass, gray and black bream, gray mullet, herrings, scad, pilchards, mackerel, anchovies, turbots, plaice, and soles, abound at certain seasons in various fishing grounds all along the coast, together with a score of other kinds—some brilliantly striped or spotted—of which I may remark, in the words of Sir Rupert the Fearless:

> Their figures and forms to describe language fails,
> They've such very odd heads and such very odd tails;
> Of their genus and species a sample to gain,
> You would ransack all Billingsgate market in vain.

Such, for instance, are the *tasargelt* and *irgal*—caught in large quantities in the bay of Agadir—which, baked, dried, or salted, are in great demand among the Moors of the interior and the palm-people of the Sahara, who account kippered fish a sovereign specific for a surfeit

of fruit. Turtle are also plentiful, it is said, at Agadir, where the natives have not discovered the galoptiousness of calipash and calipee:

Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on such men?

Even the lobster sacred to the mayonnaise, the crayfish which glorifies the bisque, the crab, the shrimp, the prawn (commend me to thy curry, O prawn!), the mussel which embellishes the Normandy matelote —yea, by St. Dando! even the oyster—serve almost as often to bait the lines of Moorish fishermen as to grace native gastronomy; while to the native Jew such luxuries are utterly tabooed. But the Moors eat slimy octopods—which are bought by the stewards of the Franco-Moorish steamers for their cabin tables—and which are also esteemed a dainty by Spanish residents in some of the coast towns —and the greasy conger and muræna are by no means despised by the natives, who, "O dura Maurorum ilia!" cut the eels into fillets, which are soaked in a sort of pickle (composed of pounded cinnamon, nutmegs, garlic, parsley-seed, and chilies),

then fried in oil, and eaten with the pickle by way of sauce—lo! the Moorish marinade! Skates, sting-rays, dog-fish, gar-fish, barnacles, and sea-urchins are also eaten by the poorest Moors. As to the fresh-water fish, of which next to nothing is known, "they may offer many objects of interest to the ichthyologist, but do not seem likely to add much to the resources of the cook."*

Many native dishes—such as *tinjeea*, *tajin*, and *hassoua*—seem mere exaggerations of the French *chiffonade*, *ratatouille*, or *pot-pourri*, the Spanish *olla*, or Scotch hotch-potch and cock-a-leekie, in their infinite confusion and undescribable variety of odds and ends, as opposed to the English theory of joints. One of the superstitions of "Pol, Tre, and Pen" is, that the Devil never goes to Cornwall, because they put everything into a pie there, and he is afraid of "going to pot" also. For the same reason, H.S.M. should never visit Marocco, where *Cidi* Soyer prides himself upon the multiplicity rather

* Sir Joseph Hooker's "Marocco and the Great Atlas," p. 72.

than the congeniality of the ingredients of his *plats*; and where the founder of a feast is wont, as a gormandiser, to applaud the prodigality* of his caterer, rather than, as a *gourmet*, to criticise the skill of his *cordon bleu*. Consequently, the cook, realising that his (or, more generally, *her*) business is simply to appease a ravenous orgasm, not to titillate a dyspeptic fastidiousness, pays no attention to the pictorial cookery, which appeals to the eye in the artistically garnished dishes and glittering paraphernalia of civilised dinner-tables. In fact, the Moor has no "broad mahogany;" so the various courses of his dinner are generally placed on leather mats or wooden stands (occasionally elaborately carved, gilded, and brilliantly painted in arabesques) as large, and one-third as high, as Vanity Fair's afternoon tea-tables.

* Witness the profusion which so appalled De Amicis when breakfasting with the late Vizier: "On the table there were about twenty dishes containing big white sugar-plums. We seated ourselves and were served at once. Twenty-eight dishes, without counting the sweets! Twenty-eight enormous dishes, every one of which would have been enough for twenty people."—"Marocco, its People and Places!" p. 245.

European guests of Moorish Amphitryons are not infrequently appalled by mysterious medleys of fish, flesh, or fowl, with spices, herbs, vegetables, seeds, fruit, and sugar or honey; as, for instance, a fowl and hare stewed with raisins, apricots, red peppers, lentils, and butter; or beef baked with slices of melon; or the far-famed *couscasoo.* As John Bull brags of the roast beef of old England, as the Scot swears by "the great chieftain of the pudding-race," so does the Moor proclaim the superiority of his national dish over all the viands of Christendom or Heathenesse. Admiring his patriotism, and declining *de gustibus disputare,* I freely admit that "whoever says *couscasoo* pronounces a grand word which arouses at once the feelings of both sexes"—in Marocco. The mere sound of the syllables is musical, with a sweet sibilance, suggestive of twin kisses united to the coo of the turtle-dove and the note of the cuckoo. Leo Africanus, writing about 1500 A.D., gives a wretchedly bald description of *couscasoo* as "made of a lump of Dow, first set upon the fire in a vessel

full of holes, and afterwards tempered with butter and Pottage." Where is the poetry in "a lump of Dow"?

The foundation of the dish is flour (wheat, millet, or maize), deftly granulated with water (or milk) by the fingers, till the globules be fine enough to pass through a medium-sized sheep-skin colander; after which they are strained for a couple of hours, or more, according to quantity, in the perforated upper compartment of a kind of double stew-pan, whereof the lower half contains sufficient water to boil either the meat, poultry, or (rarely) fish or game, together with onions, garlic, slices of pumpkin, beans, dried peas, raisins, and sometimes—for recipes differ*—dates, or preserved apricots with capsicums. Soaked in the broth, to which oil or butter is added, the granules are served up in large stoneware or wooden bowls or platters, crowned with the meat and vegetables, and sometimes garnished, says Chenier, with eggs painted several

* A French Professor of Arabic wrote an essay on couscasoo, giving no less than eight different recipes. See, also, Urquhart's "Pillars of Hercules."

colours. First dipping his fingers into water—on great occasions rose or orange scented—the Moor plunges the fingers of the right hand (never the left, which would be "worse than a blunder—a crime") into the smoking mess, after the fashion of Little Jack Horner; and, clutching the best pieces of meat, eats slowly, not forgetting, if he has any pretensions to good breeding, to leave remnants for his servants. M. Chenier, who must have been afflicted with exceptionally vulgar Moorish friends, states that, "the meal ended, they lick their fingers, and wipe them on their clothes. Those who keep negro slaves call them, and rub their hands in their hair; or, if any Jew happens to be present, they make a napkin of his garments." *Couscasoo* usually makes its appearance at the principal daily meal, about 3 p.m.

Second only in popularity to *couscasoo* are *kabubs* —alternate morsels of meat and fat, impaled and toasted on skewers; and *kiftah*—highly-seasoned forcemeat-balls, also toasted on skewers, in which may be discerned the *avatar* of the sausage or the rudimentary *rissole*. That the skewer or spit prin-

ciple is no modern innovation in Moorish cookery is amply proved by the ancient maledictory couplet:

Nsara fe Senaara !
Lehood fe Sefood !
To the hook with the Nazarene!
To the spit with the Jew!

which even at the present day may cause the Infidel explorer (who does not chance to know that Israelites were roasted in Marocco rather for the edification than for the consumption of the Faithful) to quake in his boots with fright, lest he too might be involuntarily "presented with the freedom of Moorish corporations."

Though electro-plate and modern cutlery are not uncommon among the wealthy, and though the poor sometimes scoop up their broth with mussel shells or wooden spoons, the native trencherman may be said, as a rule, to fall on his victuals tooth and nail, to live literally from hand to mouth. Though he does not, strictly speaking, play a good knife and fork, the Moor is most assuredly a professor of legerdemain; witness the rapid sleight-of-hand wherewith he con-

veys to his cavernous mouth the crumbling semi-liquescent *couscasoo*, never spilling an atom, and never touching his lips with those natural chopsticks—his fingers. Like Dr. Johnson, the native at meal-times is apt to astonish strangers within his gate by indulging in inarticulate ventriloquent noises, merely ejaculating thereafter "Alláh forgive!" to which his *convives* urbanely reply, "Alláh be praised!" He further disconcerts the European guest whom he delights to honour, by stuffing into his mouth greasy tit-bits, which the victim of his hospitality must gulp down with simulated gratitude and convulsive smiles. The exceeding brevity of his graces before and after meat, *Bismillah* and *Hamdullah* ("In the name of Alláh," and "Thank Alláh") calls to mind that wicked lazybones who, to spare himself the trouble of repeating his prayers every night, got them printed, framed, and suspended at his bed-head; which done, he was wont to murmur softly, with a sigh of relief, as he popped out the candle and popped into bed, "Them's my sentiments. Amen."

Having never yet dined with the Sultan, I cannot

describe the imperial cuisine. But, from what I hear, the *moul el tabach*, or head-cook of His Shereefian Majesty, may probably be ranked as an artist with Pharaoh's chief viander; and it may be taken for granted that between the banquets of Moulai Hassan, the Commander of the Faithful, and the meals of his upper-class subjects, there are but the differences, *not* of superior culinary science, but of greater abundance of food of the finest quality, in costlier dishes, served by a far larger number of better-dressed servants, to each of whom is assigned his special office, such as the food-bearer, the fly-flapper, the lord of the tea-tray, the grooms of the napkin and ewer.* With these exceptions there is, I am credibly informed, no distinction between the repasts of the Sultan and the citizen.

Considering that the negro is popularly credited

* The palace officials must have had rather a lively time during Moulai Hamed's reign, to judge by the following extracts from Braithwaite's Journal: January 9, 1728. "To-day the Emperor killed two of his cooks, because his dinner did not please him.' December 21. "The Emperor ordered the boy that looked after his pipes, to be flung down a precipice, for stopping his pipe too hard, *of which he died.*" Really?

with the cooking faculty (*on nait rôtisseur*—witness the black cooks of the navy and merchant-service and American hotels), a higher development of the fine art might be anticipated among the Moors, in whose veins circulates, not seldom, the negro blood annually imported by the slave-caravans of the Sahara. But the native carries his "true-blue" conservatism and bigotry even into his kitchen, where, suspiciously resenting any novelty, he would search in every new dish from Europe for hidden motives. I can imagine him detecting in a Colbert's sole a threat of financial reform, and foreseeing in a Chateaubriand's steak *Le Génie du Christianisme.*

Far more welcome to his uneducated palate would be the elegant scum of Camacho's stew-pans, and Sancho Panza's beloved hash of cow-beef with onions and turnips, than all the kickshaws of France. The very plain cookery which contented his forefathers satisfies his own wants. The flesh-pots of Marocco —remarkable for capacity rather than for variety*—

* "There were dishes of *couscasoo* set before us which seven men could hardly lift."—Hay's "Western Barbary," p. 8.

are such as might have been used in Abraham's tent to cook the fatted calf withal; or Jacob's red pottage of lentils, or the savoury venison *à la* Rebekah. The stone hand-mill, the goat-skin bag for oil or milk or water, the sheep-skin sieve, the basket-work cheese-press, the dish-cover of plaited rushes, grasses, or palmetto-fibre, the curved dagger by way of carving-knife, the earthenware stove, the rudely made though classically shaped pottery, the wooden bowl, spoon, and trencher—all indicate the gipsy cuisine and patriarchal manners of the country Moors and lower classes of the citizens.

In his partiality for a dinner of herbs, the native excels both Nebuchadnezzar and Sydney Smith. The elegant simplicity of the salad crowns his primitive repasts with a zest foolishly neglected by British gastronomy (Dr. Leared mentions in his "Visit to the Court of Marocco" a dinner, given by the Prime Minister, which consisted of thirty dishes of meat and poultry, *twelve* salads, and thirty-two sweet-meats). The market, or his garden, supplies him with celery, gigantic radishes, lettuces, cucumbers,

cress, onions, and the garlic which, together with the chili and love-apple, is regarded as being "amatory food." Though the native occasionally tempers the pungency of his green meat with oil, beetroot, and the tiny sweet tomato, the mealiness of boiled potato, cooked vegetables, pounded yolk of egg, apple, cream, and sugar never adorn the Moorish salad, which, —lacking those graces—seems merely the infancy of mixed pickles (in the far south of Marocco the tender shoots of the date-palm and barley-sprouts are eaten with salt and oil). The native idea of pickles proper seems limited to green figs, olives, peppers, and young carrots steeped in brine. Food can hardly be too highly spiced with pepper, cloves, cinnamon, nutmegs, mace, grains of paradise, galangale, ginger, turmeric, or saffron, for the liking of the Moors. This recalls the Spanish entertainment in Dryden's "Mock Astrologer," "at which the relish of all the dishes and sauces was overpowered by the common flavour of spice: fish, flesh, fowl, everything at table tasted of nothing but red pepper."

Uncleanliness—to put it mildly—is also a charac-

teristic of native fare. Judging by the habits of the people, the filthy condition of the slaughter-places outside the towns, the butchers' booths, the cook-shops, public bakeries, and the general insanitary state of the houses and streets, I calculate that the proverbial peck of dirt, supposed to be consumed by Britons in the course of a lifetime, may, in Marocco, be at least quadrupled—say a bushel; that is, of course, including flies.

The delicate digestive mechanism of the *bon vivant* may need lubricating with the sauceboat; but by the Moor such culinary embroidery would be deemed painting the lily. Despite what Melancholy Burton tells us of "Muley Hamed, king of Marocco, who spent three pounds on the sauce of a capon," I believe that at the present day not even those simplest of sauces—egg, bread, onion, parsley, apple—ever appear as sauce proper (mind, I say, as sauce proper) at Moorish meals.

Vegetables, wherein an English dinner fails, play a prominent part in Moorish gastronomy. With obsequious reverence I assign the place of honour to

the truffle (black or white), which, after the rainy season, is dug up by the natives and wild boars of the southern provinces of Abda, Haha, and Soos. Carrots, turnips, cabbages, cauliflowers,* spinach, peas, beans in great variety, yams, egg-plants, huge pumpkins, together with other vegetables and tubers, whereof the botanical names are unknown to me, are mingled in various dishes, according to season and locality. Dwarf artichokes are extensively eaten; so far disproving Rohlfs's assertion that "artichokes, asparagus, and broccoli are considered by the Moors to be flowers."†

Great is the popularity of green ears of maize roasted; and the vendor of pop-corns drives a flourishing trade among the street-Arabs. I may remark that the piety of the Moorish costermonger seems truly edifying to any stranger accustomed only to the British variety. Here a black bare-

* "I have seen cauliflowers, very white, solid, and compact, which measured a yard or more in circumference."—Shaw's "Barbary," vol. i. p. 259.

† "Adventures in Marocco," p. 26.

legged and bare-headed tatterdemalion is bawling with all his might, as he saunters through the narrow streets: "Allah is gracious! Beans, fried beans!" While rival hawkers, as picturesquely ragged as himself, vociferate in stentorian tones: "In the name of Moulai Edrees" (the patron saint of Marocco), "roast chestnuts!" or, "In the name of Cidna Mogodul" (the tutelar marabout of Mogador), "melon pips!"

Fruit is, in favourable years, remarkable for its abundance, variety, and (with the exception of apples, pears, peaches, apricots, and plums) general excellence. In addition to the citrons, lemons, limes (sweet and sour), shaddocks, prickly-pears, mulberries, walnuts, and chestnuts, common in many parts of Marocco, there are various localities famed for fruits of exceptional size or savour, such as the oranges of Tetuan, the quinces of Mequinez, the pomegranates of Maraksh, the figs of Fez, the dates of Tafilet and Akka, the almonds of Soos, the melons of Duquella,* the grapes of Tagodast ("large as

* Jackson mentions water-melons, "four of which were a camel-load."

hens' eggs!"), Edautenan, and Rabat, and the olives of Terudant.

As grease is undeniably the leading theory of native cooks, the several kinds of oil employed by them require a brief notice. The richer Moors use the olive-oil, which, extracted from the green fruit and sometimes flavoured with wild thyme or limes, almost equals the oil of Lucca or Florence. From over-ripe olives is expressed an inferior quality of oil, which, together with a still more rancid oil manufactured from the kernels of argan-tree berries, furnishes forth the pots, pans, and lamps of the poorer classes in the south, for whom also are imported sesame-oil and, though rarely, cotton-oil; while the tag-rag-and-bobtail of the north now and then use the oil of mastic berries.

The natural sequence to Morgiana's oil-jar is Jael's lordly dish of butter; albeit, as the churn is generally a goatskin bag, native butter lacks the charm of baldness; but it is not bad when fresh, except when composed of the milk of camels, cows, and goats indiscriminately mixed. The Moorish connoisseur,

however, prefers his butter old and crusted, and often buries it in earthen jars until it has acquired the proper bouquet. Desert-travellers allege that this old butter, melted, has a peculiar virtue of assuaging thirst. In some parts, the intestinal fat of cows, sheep, and goats, is made into great rolls, and sold to the poor instead of butter.

Country cheese resembles hard and salt Dutch, or, when fresh, Gorgonzola. "These cheeses are rarely above two or three pounds in weight, and resemble in shape our penny loaves — such perhaps as David carried to Saul's camp."

To oil and spice—those twain salient features of Moorish gastronomy—may be appended a third characteristic, namely honey, which, disguised in a score of recipes with flour, fruits, herbs, anise-seed, linseed, caraways, melon-pips, and berries, forms the basis of the native confectionery. (The finest "liquor of the bee"—as Mohammed calls it—is produced by the hives of Shiadma, Melilla, and Tagodast.) No sooner has the itinerant retailer of lollipops stationed himself in a shady side of the market-place

than his tiny wooden stall is surrounded by a small crowd of sweet-toothed customers—lads and lasses, even men and matrons now and then—alike eager to invest a few copper *floos* (twelve to a penny) in a kind of walnut toffee, or bullseyes with sesame-seed, or other varicoloured, quaintly-formed, and, though sticky and greasy, not unpalatable sugarplums. At street-corners may be purchased the notorious narcotic lozenges of *hashish*, which are made by mixing the powdered leaves and seeds of the hemp-plant with butter, honey, and (though not always) opium. In the Lilliputian cookshops may be seen flat cakes of thin intertwisted strips of honey-sweetened paste, called *sbukkea* (literally meshwork), fried in oil, together with a sort of fritter called *sfins*, and hot wafery pancakes, both generally eaten with honey. Even meat is, as I have before mentioned, sometimes stewed in honey and oil. Besides other honeyed cates, tarts, omelets, and biscuits (in the manufacture whereof the native Jews and Jewesses are particularly skilful), there is "a sweet pastry so cunningly compounded as to keep good for a

year;"* and among the triumphs of the Moorish confectioner may be numbered a crisp pastry prepared with attar of roses, or rose-water; a delicious conserve of orange-flowers; candied morsels of musk-lemon, citron, and other fruits; "lucent sirops tinct with spices;" most luscious dates curiously mingled with almond-paste, or pressed and steeped in anise-seed flavoured spirit; also a kind of macaroon,† and a delicate sponge-cake, probably of Spanish origin.

Descending from the pastrycook to the baker, I grieve to admit that "tin," "cottage," "twist," and roll—such as the British *custos rotulorum* sells—are branches of the staff of life with which the kissing-crustless Moor is absolutely unacquainted. The grit of hand or horse-mill, and the charcoal dust of native bakery pervade the *smead* (*i.e.* semolina) or barley-flour, of which his small muffin-shaped loaves are

* Rohlfs' "Adventures in Marocco," p. 337.

† Watson, in his "Visit to Wazan," encountered "a huge dish of gingerbread floating in eggs, oil, and butter; and a delicious cake of forty-eight large diamond-shaped macaroons, each with some kind of jelly inside it."

generally composed. On the southern borders of Marocco the substitute for bread is a dough made of meal and pounded dates with oil or water; while the oak forests of the northern provinces yield large crops of acorns, of which heavy brown scones—"wery fillin' at the price"—are kneaded by indigent natives, and —strange to say—digested. There are other varieties of bread not unlike the American slap-jack, the Australian damper, and the Mexican tortilla, save for the anise-seed, caraway-seed, cumin-seed, and grains of paradise, either mingled with or strewn over the cakes. Besides Passover bread and bannocks prepared with orange-juice, the native Jews, during the feast of Purim, bake loaves containing unbroken eggs—called by the vulgar "Haman's eyes"—which are consumed with vindictive gusto.

Manifold are the curiosities, past and present, of Moorish gastronomy. Some, indeed, may seem so incredible that I shall subscribe the names of the authors who vouch for their genuineness, leaving my reader to echo—if he lists—the Moorish prayer: "May Alláh show mercy to the tongues of travellers!"

Many a time and oft in times of drought, have I seen small piles of snails exposed for sale in the market-place of Mogador. My appreciation of that mollusc, as a comestible, is not quite so purely theoretical as is usually the case with writers who, while fervently recommending it to others, never consume it themselves. The "Burgundy oyster" and the "little nun" of Languedoc have, in the guise of broth, explored my throat. (I dare even confess—in parenthesis—to having devoured periwinkles with plebeian pin; not like that impetuous nobleman who, remarking, "You force me to proceed to extremities," cracked the coy winkle in the door.) But the repulsive Moorish snail, *el babbus*, stewed or fried in rancid oil, is a dose from which my experimental audacity recoils. Neither can I fancy locusts—boiled in salt water or vinegar and fried in oil with pepper—which are relished as greatly by the natives as the s'rimp by the cockney. In some parts of the country there are certain Brobdingnagian stag-beetles, which are often eaten by Moorish urchins;*

* Payton's "Moorish Wanderings," p. 88.

and I am assured that there is in the neighbourhood of Azamor a slug about three inches in length, called *gurrta el ma* (*? bêche de mer*), which is eagerly sought after as an article of food—to be either boiled, baked, or stewed. I am not sure whether the Moors eat the land-tortoise; but when the Spanish troops invested Tetuan, they found tortoises decidedly palatable—possibly like terrapin.

A propos of creeping things, there is a well-known fanatical sect among the Moors, called *Aissaouas*, who, when half stupefied, half frenzied, during their festivals, tear and devour live sheep, goats, even dogs and venomous snakes,* and seem to revel exceedingly in their periodical picnics.

It is alleged that in the remote south of Marocco, fat dog is considered a luxury.† But though two or three well-favoured pets of European residents in Mogador were decoyed away and eaten during the famine, I am nevertheless inclined to doubt Richard-

* Hay's "Western Barbary," p. 109.

† Richardson's "Travels in Marocco," vol. ii. p. 225.

son's statement, because *el kilb* is accounted an unclean animal, and because never yet have I seen or heard of a *fat* native dog. In South-Western Algeria, however, on the borders of Marocco, wherever mutton is scarce, "well-fed dogs, skinned, cleaned, and skewered, are prominent on the butchers' stalls."* Jackal is esteemed a delicacy;† and the flesh of the hyæna is eaten, though rarely, because it is supposed to cause stupefaction. The mountaineers, says Chenier, eat lion's-flesh despite its strong scent and toughness. (Shaw states that "lion's-flesh has no small affinity with veal in colour and flavour.") Moulai Ismael's favourite dish is reported to have been roasted fox. I have seen a couple of Moors discussing the same delicacy with obvious relish, and Lempriere assures us that the tent-dwellers not only eat foxes, but cats also. Braithwaite speaks of an imperial rat-warren near Mequinez, where "the rats burrow like rabbits, and are said to be as good meat." Stewed hedgehog

* Tristram's "Great Sahara," p. 286.

† Hay's "Western Barbary," p. 18.

is highly popular; I rather like it in *couscasoo*, though the meat is curiously glutinous. It is also baked, I am told, gipsy fashion, in a shroud of clay and aromatic leaves, entombed in red-hot cinders. The palm-people have a weakness for fricasseed ostrich and heroic omelets of its eggs. Thousands of starlings are snared during the date harvest, and eaten with as keen gusto as if they were ortolans or becaficos. Roast cuckoo is considered a *bonne bouche*;* and there are on Mogador Island edible hawks so highly prized as to be sent as presents to the Sultan.† Bustards, partridges, quails, sand-grouse, wild geese, wild ducks, flamingoes, curlew, plover, snipe, now and then figure in the Moorish bill of fare, to which native hunters sometimes contrive to add by way of venison the *oudad* of the Atlas, the gazelle, another small deer called the *horreh*, and hares. Wild boar is occasionally partaken of; but there are many of the country folk

* Jackson's "Account of the Empire of Marocco," pp. 27, 70.

† Leared's "Marocco and the Moors," p. 87.

who, abstaining virtuously from that abomination of Islam, will, notwithstanding, consume that quadruped quill-driver, the porcupine, which is but a pig disguised in penholders. The jird, a burrowing rat, and the jerboa of the sandy plains, are also reckoned good eating. Setting aside other unclean meats, Mohammed's rash ostracism (for it amounts to that) of the pig from the *mundus edibilis* of the Mussulman is not the least of the many obstacles to culinary progress in Marocco. Nor can the deepest emotions alike of the pork-butcher and philanthropist fail to be stirred by the benighted condition of a nation unacquainted with the virtues of civilised pig, with the sweet seductiveness of his chitterlings (see Rabelais), the melting tenderness of his lard, the pathos of his pettitoes, the gloomy grandeur of his black-puddings, the varied poetry of his mottled brawn and streaky bacon, and all the colossal contingencies of flitch and gammon—particularly gammon.

Generally speaking, however, the nearly omnivorous Moor prefers mutton and poultry to game,

perhaps because the Koran admonishes the sportsman to cut the throat of his game—uttering the while the name of Alláh—whereby the flesh, by excessive bleeding, is rendered insipid.

So cheap is food in Marocco, that one may appropriately apply to native gastronomy the adage of the Neapolitan *lazzarone*: "Con tre soldi vive, mange, e ti lave la faccia;" except in Tangier, where the comparatively large number of European residents, the constant influx of extravagant tourists, and the brisk provision trade with Gibraltar have considerably increased the market rates beyond those of other Moorish towns. In Mogador, about March, 1878 (*before* the famine, from which Southern Marocco has not yet quite recovered), beef was 4*d.* per pound, mutton 4½*d.*, and goat's flesh 3*d.* Fish (with the exception of soles 10*d.* per pair, and lobsters and crayfish 3*d.* each) averaged 3*d.* per pound. Fowls, pigeons, partridges, and wild ducks fetched respectively, per brace, 9*d.*, 4*d.*, and 8*d.* Hares realised 3½*d.* apiece. Fresh eggs were sold at 1*s.* 8*d.* per 100. Native flour was 14*s.* per cwt. Vegetables

were proportionately cheap, especially large pumpkins and cauliflowers, 3*d.* apiece. I remember, vividly, purchasing a small basketful of truffles, fifty-four large and small, for twenty pence. Neither could fruit be called dear when fine water-melons were 4*d.* each, pomegranates 4*d.* per dozen, grapes 1½*d.* per pound, and oranges 2*s.* per 100. These quotations, taken from an old housekeeping book, were rather over than under the mark, because alien residents in Mogador have usually to pay a trifle more for their provisions than the natives. But at the present time rates have increased very perceptibly. Beef has attained the exorbitant price of 7*d.* per pound. Shocking!

Following the natural order of things, after the meats of the Moors come the drinks, of which, however, there is a most scandalous scarcity; all because that prototype of Sir Wilfrid Lawson—Mohammed—chose to institute an Oriental order of Good Templars. There is something ineffably sad in the reflection that all religious Moslims must make their long pilgrimage through this vale of

tears uncheered by Veuve Clicquot or Margaux, unstimulated by "gum-ticklers" or "eye-openers," and unresuscitated by "corpse-revivers." But few indeed are the Moors who practise the teetotalism enjoined by their prophet in the "Cow" and "Table" chapters of the Koran, compared to the immoral many who, pretending to ascribe medicinal properties to the juice of the grape, excuse their occasional wine-bibbing as an alcoholic regimen submitted to solely for health's sake.

But Rohlfs' statement that "it is dangerous to travel in the wine-harvest time, for almost everyone is drunk and savage," is far too sweeping. The two dark-coloured sweet wines, produced—one by decoction, the other by fermentation—from raisins and grapes, both somewhat resembling rough Malaga in taste, and an inferior claret-like wine, are all too rudely manufactured to keep any length of time in amphoræ whereof the capacity varies from ten to twenty headaches.

Jackson says: "I have myself tasted at Marocco, at a Hebrew Rabbi's table, excellent imitations of

burgundy, claret, champagne, madeira, and old hock, all the produce of adjacent vineyards."

The vines are not properly cultivated. They are allowed to straggle untrellised on the ground. Nor is any attempt made to regenerate the plants, as in France, by *provignage* or *couchage*.

The native Jews clumsily distil from pomegranates, figs, grapes, raisins, dates, or honeycomb—according to locality—a colourless spirit called *mahya*, flavoured with anise or fennel seed, which, together with vile aguardiente and rum imported from Gibraltar, is largely patronised by Moor and Jew alike.

There is a good deal of coffee imbibed by the lower classes of citizens, in small coffee-houses not frequented by the *élite* of Moorish society. Almonds are occasionally roasted and ground with the berries, and the mixture is sometimes scented with rose-water. In the towns, too, the waterseller's bell seems to tinkle incessantly, as with goatskin water-bag he perambulates the dusty streets in quest of droughty customers. Milk, especially sour milk, is

the pet "quencher" of the country-folk.* But green tea is, if not the national, certainly the favourite beverage of the higher classes, who to a man prefer the perilous stimulation of Hyson to the gentle exhilaration of Pekoe, Congou, or Souchong. Most well-to-do natives take tea both before and after the last three meals of the day; so the reader will be prepared to believe that the consumption of *green* tea in Marocco is larger, in proportion to the number of its population—say 7,000,000—than in any other country.

The tea-equipage usually consists of a bright brass tray, elaborately chased, whereon are placed tiny glass tumblers and a small metal pear-shaped tea-pot, in which is put half a handful of hyson, with sufficient loaf-sugar and boiling-water to make a thin syrup, often flavoured, in lieu of cream, with mint, or marjoram flowers, orange-blossoms, citron-leaves and blooms, wormwood, "old man's beard," or ambergris.

* Cider, "and a very pleasant drink made with honey," are mentioned by Braithwaite.

Considering the effects of tea on the manners of its constant consumers nearly all over the world, there might seem reason to believe that the Moors have unawares connived at the introduction of a social reform bill. The tea-caddy may prove a wooden horse eventually; but the "Chinese nymph of tears" —though her convivial power is recognised between man and man—has not yet thrown down in Marocco the conventional Moslim barrier between man and woman, nor has she extended petticoat influence beyond the walls of the harem, where women and children still eat apart from the lords of creation.

In conclusion let me warn the enthusiastic epicure who may be tempted to imitate the example of Apicius, in seeking *recherché* dishes on the Barbary coast, that his palate will require no little education to appreciate the peculiarities of the Moorish cuisine. He may study with advantage the system of slow cookery in earthenware vessels on charcoal fires, which produces such tender meat, and he may also learn how great an improvement in stew, hash, or mince, is fruit, especially raisins, dates, and almonds.

But let him remember that he will have much to endure in pursuit of culinary knowledge in a country where, for the most part (in the words of Garrick), "Heaven sends us good victuals, but the devil sends cooks"—witness the dreadful experience of Edmondo de Amicis, at Tangier: "The Arab dishes, objects of our intense curiosity, began to circulate. I tasted the first with simple faith. Great Heaven! My first impulse was to attack the cook. I understood in one moment how it was that a people who ate in that way should take other views of human life than ours. I cannot express what I felt otherwise than by likening myself to some unhappy wretch forced to satisfy his appetite upon the pomatum-pots of his barber. There were flavours of soaps, pomades, wax, dyes, cosmetics—everything that is least proper to be put in a human mouth. At each dish we exchanged glances of wonder and dismay. No doubt the original material was good enough—chickens, mutton, game, fish; large dishes of a fine appearance, but all swimming in most abominable gravies, and so flavoured and perfumed, that it would have seemed

more natural to attack them with a comb than with a fork. But there was one among us who managed to taste of all; a consolatory fact which proves that there are still great men in Italy."

Nor does there seem to be much prospect of improvement, for though there are faint traces of the influence of Spanish cookery to be discerned in the coast towns, and though French camp-cookery may invade the Algerian frontier of the empire, I imagine that Moslim prejudices, together with the culinary traditions of the native Jews, and trans-Saharan slaves, tend to preserve, at least in the interior, the original barbarism of Moorish gastronomy.

G. D. C.

THE END.

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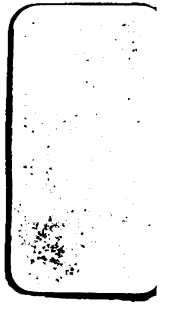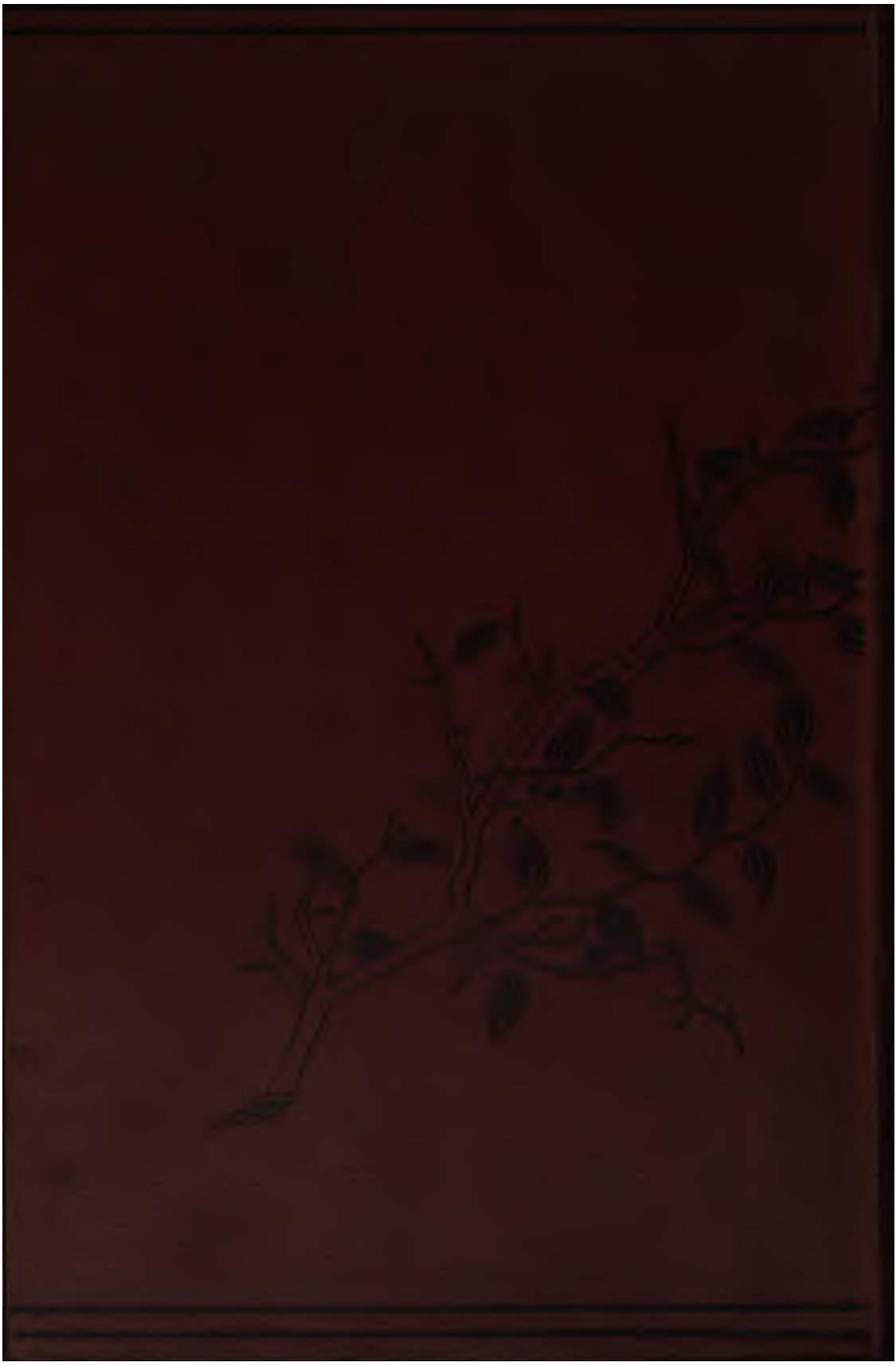
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